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THREE  
TREATISES  
ALL

Tending to Christian Practice,

*First*, The Vertue and Value of Baptism, wherein the Dignity and Duty of Baptism is Doctrinally explained, and Practically applied.

*Second*, The hard way to Heaven, Intended to be Preached at *Michaels Cornhil*, But by reason of the extraordinary concourse of people, Preached at *Creet-Church* the day after the Authors coming out of the Tower.

*Third*, Reformation not Separation, or Mr. *Croftons* Plea for Communion with the Church of *England*, notwithstanding those Administrations by which he cannot Administer.

A Work suited to these times, and may serve as a Guide to private Christians in their publique and private Worship.

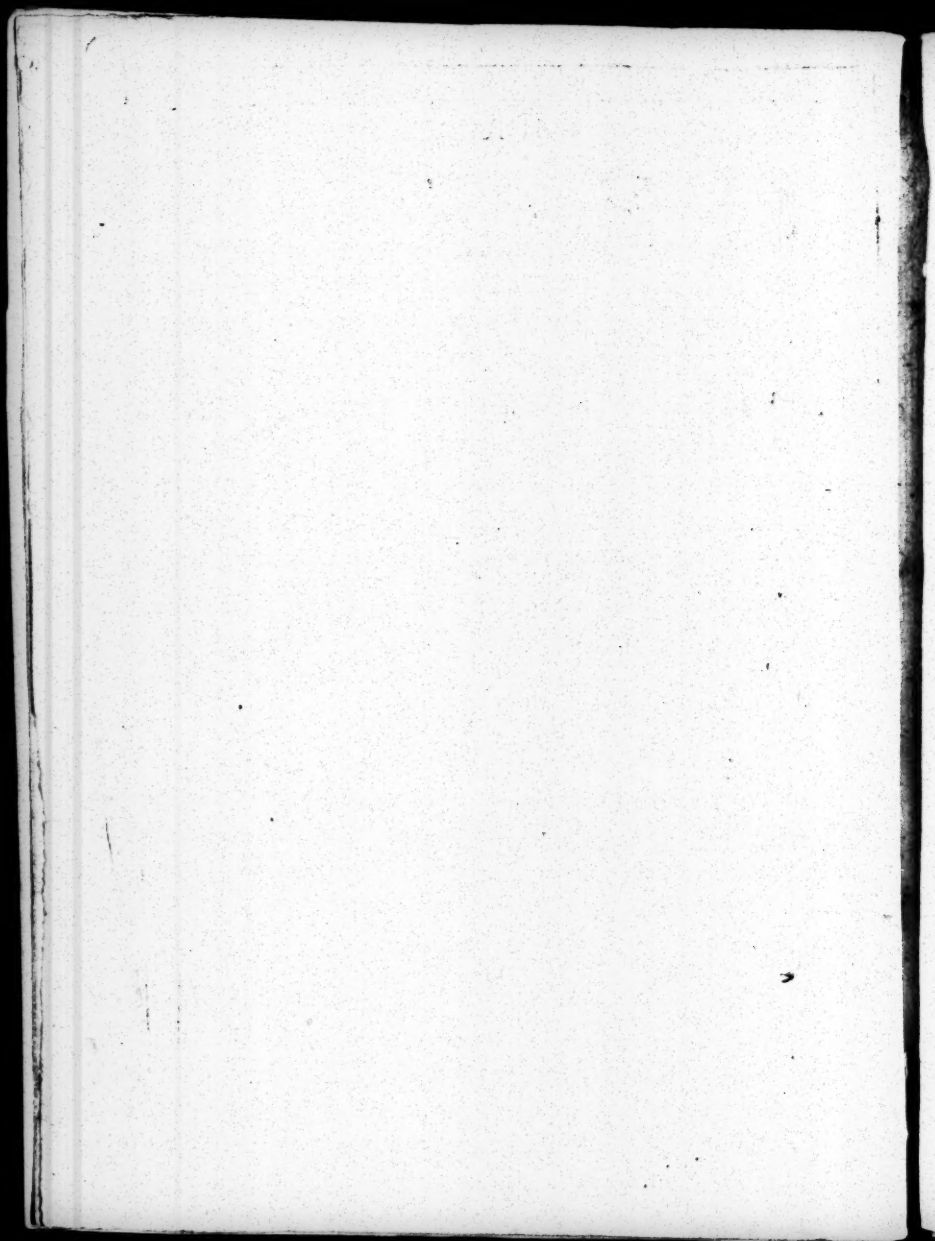
By *ach. Crofton* late Minister of *Botolph Aldgate, Lond.*

*Finally my Brethren farewel, be of one mind, and the God of Peace shall be with you.*

*Follow peace and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, Heb. 12 14.*

LONDON,  
Printed in the Year, 1663.





THE  
VERTUE  
AND  
VALUE  
OF  
BAPTISM,

In which the

*Dignity and Duty of  
The due Right of Infants to  
And their right above that of grown persons by } Baptism,  
The degrading and destructive Principles and }  
Practices of*

A R E

Catechetically propounded, plainly Preached, and  
now Published as an Antidote against all Baptism-  
Despising Dictates.

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By *Jach. Crofton*, late Minister at *Botolph Algate*,  
*London*.

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*London*, Printed for *Dorman Newman* at the  
*Kings-Arms* in the *Poultry* next to *Gro-*  
*cers-Ally*. 1663.

THE

VII

AND

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On the 1st of January 1871  
now published in a new edition

By the same Author  
London

King and the City of London  
and the City of London



To the Right Worshipful  
RICH. GARFORDE  
AND  
ROBERT BURDET,  
*Esquires.*

*And the rest of his Beloved Parishioners,  
late Assertors of his Innocency, and Protestors against  
his groundless and furious Persecutions.*

*Right Worshipful and well-beloved.*



O you of all men, this Treatise oweth  
its *Dedication*, and from you must  
needs demand its *Patronage*: for that  
in order to your good in the Instruc-  
tion and establishment of you in the  
order of the Gospel, and Ordinances  
of Jesus Christ; it hath been Preached once and  
again, and is now Printed: you cannot be insensi-  
ble how you baptized Members of the Catholique  
A Church

### *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

*Church* were dispersed, as Sheep without any Shepherd ; nay by the *Congregational*, *Anabaptistical* principles and practises, and in order to their schismatical *Church-gathering design*, you were by *Rude*, *Rust* ; *Foolish-wise*, and *Baptism-blaspheming Simpson*, *paganized* and proclaimed *Dogs*, *aliens and strangers to the Commonwealth of Israel* ; when the zealous importunity of some among you, meeting in me with a real pity of your *Pagan posture*, did engage me to take of you, as a *Church of Jesus Christ*, the care and charge. I was constrained to lay again the Foundations these wicked men had razed, and to inform you in the first rudiments of *Religion*, and *first Ordinances of Worship*, that you might understand the *dignity and duty of your Baptism* ; in which I find such dulness in common capacity, that the things you heard, you must hear again, and indeed *Read* before many will receive them : I being come among you, and (by Gods blessing on my Ministry) having reduced you into some order, convicted some persons of their *Rebaptized vanity*, and parents of the sinful neglect of their Infants interest in the Covenant : have met with violent opposition, and malicious interruptions in the work of God : constraining me to *Preach unto you the Gospel of Truth through much contention* ; wherein yet through grace *I have waxed bold*. You are manifest Witnesses that the Anabaptists will *baptize with fire and fury*, such as they cannot *baptize with water* in the way of their folly : By what clamours have they clouded my name (representing me uncivil, whilst for fear of the Law they durst not render me prophane) how they have by false surmizes

## *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

mizes prejudiced present powers, by false accusations, palpable perjury, extrajudicial Process, partial and prejudiced Judges (of their own picking) and implacable fury darkened my credit, weakened my Ministry, disturbed my peace, and endeavoured to stop my mouth, you and all the Churches of God cannot but know. The guilt and odium, whereof you have taken from your selves by your seasonable Attestation to my *Innocency*, and serious protest against their groundless cruelty, wherein I bless God I can rejoyce, *It is the cause that makes the Martyr*, and what is the cause of all that calamity they have to me created; Let the *fretting of their spirits*, when your Pulpit sounded the *Sacrament of baptism is to be administered*; your Reverend attendance on that Ordinance is desired: their railing speeches on all occasions uttered against *Infant-baptism*, their *invective Letters* to me written, (which I keep as Monuments of their folly and malice) their often struggling to set up *Oats, Knowls, Lamb, Simpson*, to blaspheme Gods Ordinances; and at last the violent and unjust intrusion of *John Simpson* into the *baptismal* Season of the Sabbath, to the excluding of that Ordinance, and vilifying the same in the sight of the people, and that not onely in its *subjects*, but in it *self*, openly teaching *baptism is no ground of Communion with the Church visible*; witness to all the world, if I suffer as an evil doer; whose Ox or Ass have I taken? what Law have I violated? whom did I injure in word or deed? How often have I sought for competent impartial Judges, that might convict me? and proposed ways of accommodation: admitted them, when sought by my



### *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

enemies, whose Return hath been, *we will have no peace, no agreement, no arbitration*: nay, my enemies being Judges, the ground of their quarrel and enmity, is my endeavours to return you into order; and their cry is, *He will not let Simpson preach*: So that because I will not suffer *that woman* Jezabel to teach and seduce the Lords people, I must be loaded with calumny, and followed with vexation: Well be it so, I will bless God for supporting, and wait on him for saving mercy; and pray that you may be the more confident in the truths confirmed by my sufferings, wherein you also have born your share: I cannot but observe how Heretical Malice hath trampled on your *dignities* and *gravities* by military insolency and vulgar rudeness, yet hath God hitherto given your hearts to adhere to me, and the truths by me witnessed. Whilst you have owned my Ministry, under so great a *Fight of affliction*, I cannot but hope you will do it still, and be more confirmed in *the vertue and value of your received Baptism*, both which are here plainly and practically propounded to your view. Many eminent men have most fully debated the Controversie, and defended your *Infants right to baptism*, but of their labours, I observe the vulgar make little use; for Practical *conviction of sin*, I find to be the best *confutation of error*, and have therefore attempted it in the ensuing Treatise for its stile and method, suited to vulgar capacity; receive it as a token of my true affection to your souls, and Gods holy Ordinances, read it as the direction of your duty, learn by it to prize Baptism, as the high privileges of you and yours; and in doing and suffering, shew forth

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

forth the *vertue and value* of the Covenant of God on your flesh, living as Baptized into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to which end you may be assured as of the endeavours, so the earnest prayers of,

*Your greatly reproached and persecuted, but yet really innocent, and resolved zealous Pastor,*

ZACH. CROFTON.

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TO

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THE  
 DECLARATION  
 OF THE

# TO THE READER.

*Courteous Reader.*

**H**O U canst not be such a stranger in our Israel, as to be ignorant of my sufferings by the intrusion of John Simpson into my Pulpit, and amongst my people: I doubt not but thou mayest well with many other enquire the reason of my resistance, the which is written in such legible Characters, that just men and zealous Christians cannot but Run and Read them; I have in a small Book, called Right Re-entred, given the world some account, as to my own personal Reasons, wherein had I been silent, can any that know John Simpson, a man subject to such windings and turnings, that he cannot to his own Profelytes appear to be the same this year he was the last: A man under judicial Parliamentary censure for his Errors: a man by the most sage, grave and pious Ministers of this City (the place of his Residence) branded as a Seducer from the truth of Jesus Christ, a man for Sediton (so owned by himself) imprisoned, banished, and afflicted, as an evil doer; a man of such violence, commotion, division, confusion, distraction, disorder: that Bishopsgate and Aldgate must needs lament the day of his being in the midst

The Com-  
 mittee for  
 Plundered  
 Ministers.

London  
 Testimony  
 to the truth  
 &c.

## To the Reader.

*midst of them. And yet enquire why should Master Crofton so much withstand John Simpons preaching; but if he or all his Adherents were (as they never can be) able to acquit him from these Blots that must needs render him unfit for Gospel-work: yet Master Crofton hath too too just cause to withstand his Ministry, not only for his unjust intrusion, and dis-ingenuous silence, under any propounded conveniencie for the people, and malicious exercise of his pretended Ministry, to the meer humoring of an envious, prophane Faction, pursuing nothing but Confusion and Disorder, not having any assembly of his own to engage him to it. But for those Falshoods, that in the name of the Lord he doth utter to the decrying of Gods holy Ordinances, and danger of mens Salvation; herein he is frequent and of which I should (were it not that my weak people are apt to take boldness to sit under his Ministry from my hearing him) make a full detection: Can any man think Ministerial zeal can in the least admit afternoon contradiction, of a forenoon Doctrine of Truth. I have before noted to the world, that he no sooner violently entered my Church, and interrupted some of Gods Ordinances, but he presently vilifying those he could not kinder, openly averred, that to learn a Catechism was not to worship God; you might as well take your children to the Market or Fair, and buy them baubles, Rattles, and Hobby Horses as Catechisins: I well know that he did with prophane impudence in the Pulpit at Great Al-hallows, and in my own Pulpit make a dreadfull appeal to God, Angels and Men. that he never Preached such Doctrine; but I have offered, and do yet offer, if he will be convicted before any competent Judges, to convince him by some of his late Profelytes,*  
*and*

## To the Reader.

*and many others that heard him speak it, and after most wickedly deny that he spake it; he must not think but we know the Serpentine wisdom of Seducers leads them to deny they spake the doctrine they divulge, if the time and other circumstances will not defend them in it. And yet in the Sermon wherein he would deny this notion, he doth but Familistically Spiritualize, and runs into this assertion, which is yet Tantamount, That it is gross ignorance to say, or think that the teaching of Catechistical heads of Religion is the way to bring any man to the knowledge of Christ. I confess this contempt of catechizing was in my ears, but a præludium to the decrying of Infant-Baptism, which engaged me to attend his Wednesday Lectures for some few dayes, when he was from 1 Pet. 3. 21. Treating of Baptism, wherein I heard many absurdities, false interpretations, and incongruous expressions uttered, but at length found him that pretends he had run over the bogs of Familism, yet not to have been swallowed up in them, to have fallen up to the arm holes, if not over head and ears; for not only did he despise Pædo Baptism by the contemptible terms of Baby-sprinkling, cozening Infants, and the like; but proclaimed Water-Baptism, the very Ordinance it self, to be nothing worth; and the Spirit, inward Grace, the answer of a good conscience, to be all in all, even unto communion with the Church visible; and this he did in a full Discourse, half an hour long, directed to his own Profelytes. with many invectives against such as would not admit Communion with the unbaptized in flesh; these nullifying notions of Gods Ordinance, I could not bear, and resolving they should not corrupt on my stomach, or be have liberty to make a false appeal, to God,*

*His Book of  
Justification  
in the  
Epist. to  
the Reader.*

## To the Reader.

*God, Angels and Men, in the denial of what he had delivered, or to complain, I dealt not fairly by him, publicly to render him erroneous before I had charged him personally, I did on the day on which he preached it, being the 2. of September, 1657. and as soon as Sermon was ended, repair to my Study, and writ unto him this Letter following.*

Mr. Simpson,

I did this day with no little trouble hear your Discourse, and pretermittting your inoongruous, impertinent expressions, and misapplication of Scripture, with many Ordinance-degrading, and Church-confounding speeches, you laid down this Inference, That *Baptism is not the ground of communion with the Church, but real grace the answer of a good conscience, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead*: and therefore you did declare, *Though a man were altogether ignorant of the Doctrine of Baptism, and had never passed under that outward Ordinance, you could own him as a Member of the Church, and hold communion with him, and admit him to all the Ordinances of Jesus Christ*: and much to this purpose you delivered.

Sir, When I consider, the answer of a good conscience is onely known to God, I cannot believe God hath made it the ground of communion with men, and outward Baptism to be the first Ordinance of God to the Church, and external Seal of the Covenant, and the very door of admission into the Church erected by Jesus

a

Christ



## To the Reader.

Christ, and reckoned by the Apostle among the  
τῶν στοιχείων καὶ ἀρχῶν καὶ λογίων οὐ θεῶν ; and so in all ages of  
the Church made the foundation of the Church  
Ordinances *in foro Ecclesia* ; I cannot consent to  
communion with such as are unbaptized, but  
must fear in this case, God may say to me as to  
them in *Ezek. 44. 7.* For though outward Bap-  
tisme without inward grace can carry no man to  
Heaven, yet the Church cannot without palpable  
prophaneness administer other ordinances of Com-  
munion to the unbaptized ; I pray you tell me  
whether you do not in vain press me to outward  
Baptism, when you tell me, *I may live and dye  
in communion with the body of Christ all my days,  
and yet never know the Doctrine, nor pass under  
the Ordinance of water-Baptism ?* Is Baptism be-  
come an *Adiaphoron* ? These things I thus time-  
ly signify to you to prevent mistakes (desiring  
your arguments for your position (for that your  
Cited Scripture. *Rom. 15. 7.* doth not conclude  
it but is far wide) to which I promise you a  
speedy answer, unless they be convincing to

Septemb. 2. 1657.

ZACH. CROFTON.

*Though this Letter was by a messenger sent of pur-  
pose delivered into his hand, disingenious he ne-  
ver returned answer to it, neither in publique or  
private, but suffered these contemptible notions to  
abide on the Spirit of the people, as if they were  
Gospel truths. Having observed his silence and re-  
solving*

## To the Reader.

*solving to leave him without excuse, I wrote unto him this second Letter.*

**S I R,**

I did this day sevenday signifie my dissatisfaction in your Doctrine, and dislike of that old *Familistical notion* you published; I demanded your reasons, but have received none. Sir, think you not that it is your duty to *convince gainsayers*, or can I pass in silence, *Baptism-annihilating notions*, I cannot, I will not. Sir, I once more demand your Arguments, and that as you are a man of any ingenuity willing to give an account of your Doctrine.

Sept. 9. 1657.

ZACH. CROFTON.

*This also he received, but passed it in silence, and never to this day gave any the least answer to defend or retract his error: If therefore I find him obstinate after the first and second admonition, I hope I shall not be blamed for rejecting him as an Heretick, and withstanding him from filling my Peoples Heads with low thoughts of Gods Ordinances, and the high privileges of Grace, whose tongues can already speak too despicably of them: God having in his providence brought me to the section of Baptism in my course of Catechizing, and giving me a little breathing space from the violent persecutions of his Abettors, I thought*

To the Reader.

*it to be my duty to dictate to my people, the Dignity of Baptism, and knowing that many heard his Error, who would not hear the correction of it, I have committed it to the Press, and sent it into publique view, submitting it, and my opposition of the Seducer that occasioned it, to thy censure, desiring thou mayst shake off prejudice, and read with seriousness and sobriety, whereby I doubt not but thou mayst find profit, for which he prays, who seeth a Divine Stamp on every outward Gospel-Ordinance.*

*Zach. Chrofton.*

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A SHORT  
CATECHISM.  
BRIEFLY  
Propounding, and plainly shewing  
THE  
V E R T U E and V A L U E  
O F  
BAPTISM,  
O R,

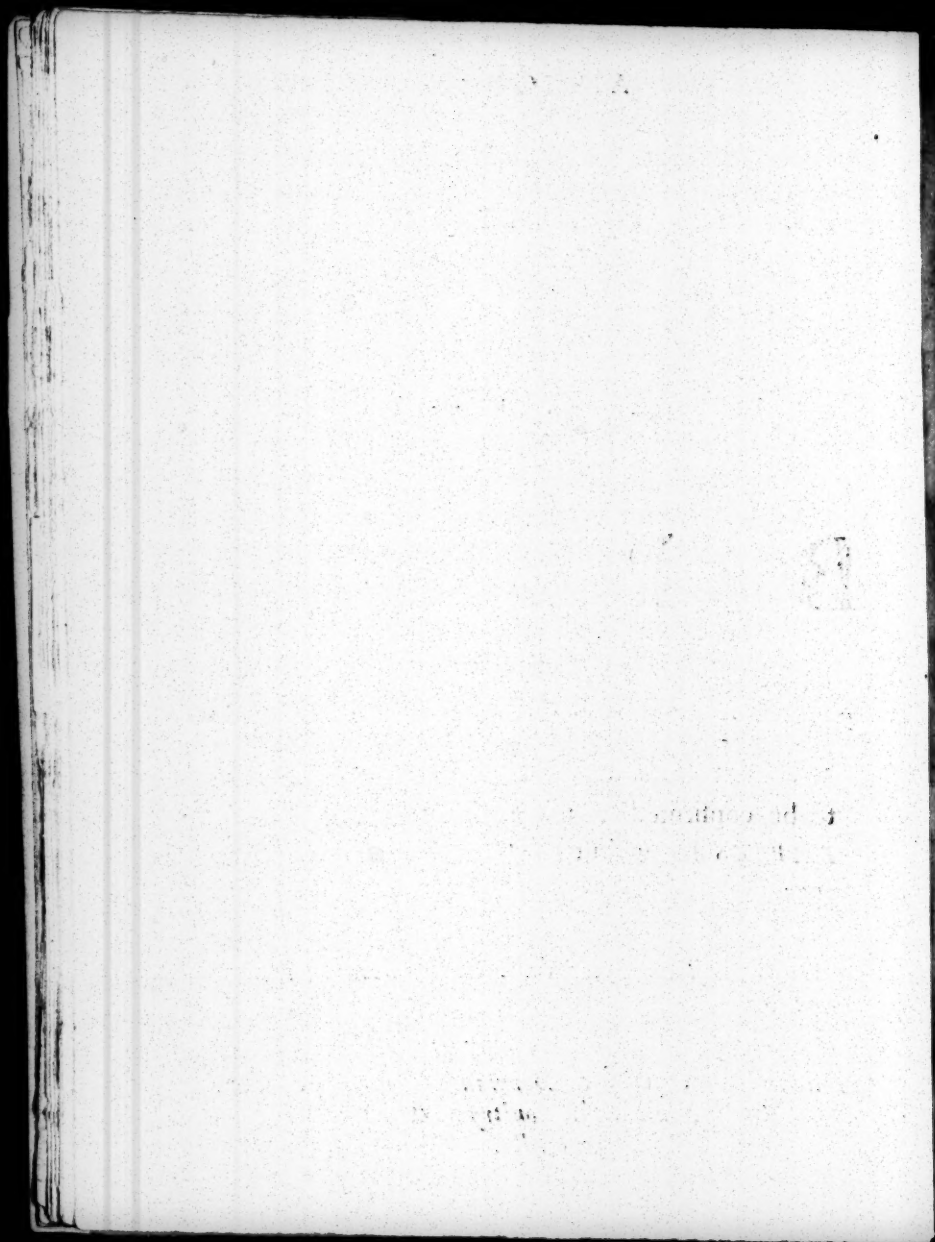
The following T R E A T I S E fitted  
to the weak capacity of such People as desire  
to be confirmed in the *Nature* and *Necessity* of  
BAPTISM, against the Contempt and Neglect  
thereof.

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By *Zach. Crofton*, late Minister at *Botolph Algate*,  
*London*.

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*London*, Printed for *Dorman Newman* at the  
Kings-Arms in the *Poultry* next to *Gro-*  
*cers-Ally*.





A SHORT  
CATECHISM,

Briefly propounding , and plainly  
shewing the Vertue and Value of Baptism.

Quest.



*What is your Name ?*

*Ans. M.*

*Q. Who gave you this Name ?*

*A. My Parents the natural Authors of my being , and Instruments of my interest in the Covenant of God.*

*Q. When did they give you this Name ?*

*A. At my Baptism , when I was dedicated to God , and by the washing of my body in pure water fitted for approach to him.*

*Q. What is baptism ?*

*A. It is a solemn and Religious application of water by the hand of a lawful Minister to fit Subjects to signifie the blood of Christ , and Seal the Covenant of Grace.*

*Q. What*



### *A short Chatechism.*

*Q. What is the outward sign in baptism ?*

*A.* Water, in opposition to all other elements; and pure water without any mixture or composition; for so Christ did appoint, and his appointment doth stamp dignity on that despicable Element.

*Q. What is the inward grace in baptism ?*

*A.* The blood of Jesus Christ with its properties and effects, the remission of sin, and regeneration of the soul.

*Q. Is baptism only a sign to represent these things to our minds ?*

*A.* No, but also a seal to ratifie them to our soul; and therefore a right unto the Promise is the ground of baptism, and baptism a reason of our Faith in the Promise to be pleaded in Prayer for obtainment.

*Q. What is the form of baptism ?*

*A.* The application of water, by Dipping, or Sprinkling; for the manner is of no moment, so it be done solemnly and religiously, as a sacred Ordinance by divine institution, with prayer to God, and a Dedication of the person baptized, unto the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

*Q. Who is to administer Baptism ?*

*A.* A lawful, and none but a lawful Minister; for Baptism is an act of Office and Argument of Faith; therefore to be applied by authority; and then the Baptism of women, and private men is void and null.

*Q. Who are fit Subjects to be baptized ?*

*A.* Such, all such, and onely such as are in Covenant with God; for the qualification that must guide the Church in applying Baptism, must be *Interest in the Covenant*; and these are two sorts. 1. Infidels  
conver-

### *A short Catechism.*

converted to the faith. 2. The Infants of one or both Christian Parents.

*Q. By what must Infidels converted to the Faith be judged, within the Covenant, and fit Subjects to be baptized.*

*A. By making a profession of saving faith, which may be done by men in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity ; not by a saving profession of faith, importing sincerity of grace, nor by a well ordered conversation ; for Gods Ministers must judge by a present visible sign, and they cannot search the heart : And plants are to be set in the Church before we look for fruit ; Baptism is a bond unto amendment of life.*

*Q. How can it be proved that the infants of Christian Parents are within the Covenant, and to be baptized ?*

*A. During the Administration of the Covenant in the times of the Old Testament, the natural issue of Gods people, before they acted their faith, even as soon as they were born, were within the Covenant: The form of the Promise is, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed* : Circumcision the Seal of the righteousness of faith, was set in their flesh at eight days old. God claims the natural issue of his Covenant people as his own, when he calls them out of *Egypt*, *Exod. 5. 1.* chargeth them with duty, *Dent. 14. 2.* complaineth of Idolatry, *Ephes. 16. 21.* Chastiseth their sin, *Amos 3. 2.* And Christ calls the Jews natural, the *Children of his Kingdom*, and placeth in them the Right to the mercies he brought, whilst the Gentles were *Dogs licking up the crumbs.**

### *A short Catechism*

*Q. But what is the interest of Infants in the Old Testament to us under the new?*

*A. Very much; for whilst we see they have been in Covenant, it will direct us to see a very clear reversal of their right, and plain limitation of the Covenant before we part with such a birth right and privilege; for common Justice will not suffer us without good warrant to change a Fee-farm to our selves and heirs, for a Lease for term of Life; and we need a clear reason to convert the Jews from the old Covenant, whereby they begot an *holy seed* to God, unto a straiter Covenant, that provides for the Parent, but leaves the child prophane, and estranged to God. The Enemies of our Baptism, cry for an expresse command to baptise Infants; but instead of shewing any, we think we have good reason to say, *we as such Infants, have by a long Tenure an interest in the Covenant*; shew us a clear Gospel Writ of Ejection, if you think now to dispossess us.*

*Q. But have you any good ground in the New Testament, on which infants, as the natural issue of believing Parents may claim an interest in the Covenant?*

*A. Yes, very much, when we consider little sucking Babes brought in arms to be received by the Lord Jesus to be blessed by him, to be declared members of the Kingdom of Heaven, propounded as such who ought to be received in his name, as his Disciples, and not to be offended; all which are the blessings of the Covenant: and that the Apostle affirms of the *Gentiles ingrafted in*, as well as the *Jews cut off*, in *Rom. 9*. That if the first-fruits, then the*

### *A short Catechism.*

the whole lump is holy ; if the root, then the branches are holy; and the branches do partake of the fatness of the Olive : we must cast away our reasons if we see not Infants interest in the Covenant.

*Q. But have you not yet some plainer Scriptures to prove their Title ?*

*A. Yes, the Apostle doth expressly say the Infants of one Christian Parent is holy, 1 Cor. 7. 14. of real holiness none understand it, and natural holiness, taking away the blot of Bastardy, supposing Faith essential to Marriage, is too ridiculous to be received ; it must needs then mean a federal holiness by the extent of the Covenant, and in the esteem of the Church, in Acts 2. 38. the Apostle saith expressly, The promise is to you, and to your children : This promise cannot be of extraordinary Gifts, because it is extended to all that shall be called, nor is it to children when called, for that were not to them as children : the Holy Ghost doth not use to speak non sense, and express personal qualifications by terms of relation, but tels the believer, his children as his children have a priviledge in the Covenant above other mens children ; so that it is plain such Infants are within the Covenant, and according to their capacity to enjoy the Seals and Priviledges thereof.*

*Q. But they are not capable of being baptized, because they can act nothing in the Ordinance, nor can they make a profession of Faith and Repentance.*

*A. Nor is such capacity needful ; for profession gives no right to Baptism, but as an evidence of Covenant-Interest : and their right to the Covenant, manifested by their descent from such Parents is as good a reason for their Baptism : and the Subjects of the*

### *A short Catechism.*

initiating Seal do not act any thing, as if God would thereby dictate, inability to action shall be no bar to Baptism.

*Q. But those we read of in Scripture that were baptized were at grown years?*

*A. So were those who were first circumcised; but that was occasional and circumstantial: The Church is founded in grown Trees, but is to be edified by infant branches.*

*Q. But their is no institution for Infant Baptism.*

*A. That Baptism is instituted, cannot be denied: Age or Infancy are onely directions to whom to apply it; and thereof the qualification of Covenant Interest is according to Scripture the clear direction: Moreover Infants may be Disciples, bearing on them the name of Christ, and are Members of Nations, and so the Institution, directing the baptizing of Discipled Nations, is to them extended.*

*Q. But all you urge for infants baptism, is by way of inference and consequence.*

*A. Scripture-Inference is Gods Word, binding mans conscience: it was the way of Christ his convincing the Sadduces of the Resurrection; and of Pauls Preaching at Athens; and is your onely way to warrant womens Communion at the Lords Table, and shall it not be of force to Infants Baptism?*

*Q. What benefit do you receive by your baptism?*

*A. Much, as I am baptized, and enjoy that Ordinance of God; and much as I was baptized in infancy by the early enjoyment of it.*

*Q. What is your benefit received by the Ordinance it self?*

### *A short Catechism.*

**A.** A fit qualification to draw nigh to God with confidence.

**Q.** *What do you mean by drawing nigh to God ?*

**A.** Not onely the possession of heavenly glory when I dye ; which I deny not , but such may enjoy whom the providence of God cuts off before they can be baptized : Nor onely the *private and personal acts of the soul*, which may be presented (though not with so much confidence) acceptably to God before a man can be baptized after his conversion ; he not living in contempt or wilful neglect of Baptism ; but I mean an *approach to God in the assemblies of his people*, to worship before him, as a Member of his Church, and one of his peculiar people, to bear his name in the World, and of his *Royal Priest-hood*, to offer up acceptable Sacrifice, and and enjoy all his Ordinances; all which I do in assurance, having my body washed with pure water.

**Q.** *Is then Baptism the necessary qualification for approach to God ?*

**A.** Yes, it is so *necessary* that the unbaptized, may not appear in the Assemblies of his people : The way of Christ his appearance in his Church, as the Messiah, was prepared by Baptism ; therefore *John* the promised *Elias*, is called *John the Baptist*. Baptism prepared Christ for his work of Mediatorship ; he neither *prayed* (that we read of) nor was *tempted*, nor *preached*, nor *received the Testimony from Heaven* till he was baptized ; and if the head were thus sanctified, muchmore must the members : moreover *Circumcision* did sanctifie such as might come nigh to the Sanctuary ; and baptism hath succeeded in the room, signifies and seals the same grace,  
and



### *A short Catechism.*

and in all things serve to the same end in the Christian Church, that *Circumcision* did to the Jews.

*Q. What is the use of Baptism, that it should so qualifie with confidence in access to God?*

*A.* By baptism I am visibly interested in Jesus Christ, Gal. 3. 27. incorporated into his Church. I Cor. 12. 13. made a member of the household of faith, and Common wealth of Israel, consecrated unto God, Ephes. 5. 26. having holiness stamped on my flesh, being sanctified by the washing of water by the word; And in Covenant with God, having the Seal of the promise, whereby God is become mine, and I am dedicated to be his, in faith and obedience to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: all which are clear grounds of Faith, to be improved unto my encouragement in approach unto God

*Q. Are all that are baptized partakers of these privileges?*

*A.* All that are baptized enjoy these privileges visibly and sacramentally in the judgement of the Church, by whose just censure they may be deprived of them; but not *Savingly* and *Sincerely*: for to some the inward grace is withheld from Gods outward Ordinance, according to Gods holy purpose: And many not acting faith to claim, lose the privileges Sealed: Baptism is in its nature and efficacy the same to all, but by reason of the incapacity of some it is not always a like effectual.

*Q. What principles or practices are to be condemned as contrary to this use of baptism?*

*A.* Many, as 1. Such as dictate to the unbaptized a liberty of access to God; teaching that baptism is not  
the

### *A short Catechism.*

the ground of Communion with the Church visible, but real grace, the witness of a good conscience, and therefore tender all the Ordinances to the unbaptized, which is directly opposite to this use of the Ordinance, and interrupts the Order of the Gospel, giving God cause to complain, as once in *Israel*, Ezek. 44. 7. *Ye have defiled my Sanctuary, by admitting into my Sanctuary the unbaptized in flesh and in spirit.*

*Q. Who are further to be condemned as contrary to this consecrating nature of Baptism?*

*A.* Such as disown their baptism, in drawing nigh to God; as do some *Familiists*; who deny all outward Ordinances and pretend to serve God altogether in *Spirit*, as if divided man could draw nigh to God, or the Lord would not be adored by the body he hath redeemed; or true grace could admit a contempt of any divine Ordinance: Or the *Anabaptists*, who are so irrational as to renounce their baptism, because received in *Infancy*, as if a corruption in circumstance (if this were one) had destroyed the essence of the Ordinance; but indeed they do it out of ignorance, or obstinacy, deeming Gods institution, *Superstition*, and so run into the sin of *Sacrilege*.

*Q. Is the denial of Infants Baptism Sacrilege?*

*A.* Whilst it robs God of the children to him begotten, the Church of Members to her born, believing Parents of a ground of faith, and reason of hope, and the Infants of their undoubted interest in the Covenant, I cannot but judge it sacrilege.

*Q. Who else are to be blamed as repugnant to this consecrating nature of Baptism?*

*A.* Such

### *A short Chatechism.*

*A.* Such as *disregard baptism in its application to others*; as do *Parents* who pass over their *Childrens* baptism as a *Civil complement*, and *meer Formality* to please *Friends*, but never compose themselves to it as an *act of Religion*, and *Ordinance of God*; pray not for a  *blessing on it*, nor praise *God* for the  *blessing of it*; nor instruct their baptized children *in the benefit and use of it*: and *people* who attend with some shew of reverence on other ordinances, but rudely rush out of the *Congregation* when baptism is administered, as if it were some idle action; and as if the *sanctifying of a soul to God*, the *sealing of the Covenant*, and *admission of a member into the Church*; were of no use to them, nor worth their attendance.

*Q.* Who else are to be blamed, as contrary to the nature of baptism?

*A.* Such as *disesteem their own baptism*, neither improving it against *sin*; nor arguing to themselves the *duty or dignity of their baptism*; so as to make baptism an *engagement* against *sin* to holiness; and *encouragement of their Spirits* in holy duties.

*Q.* Who else are to be blamed as contrary to the consecrating nature of baptism?

*A.* Such as *deny the baptized the liberty of access to God in the assemblies of his people*; as do the *Independents*, who gather *Churches out of Churches* rightly constituted; and call the *baptized* in *Church* way, as if they were out of it, and prescribe a *Covenant* of their own, whereby to admit *Church-Members*; and affect to distinguish themselves from *others baptized*, by the term of *Saints, Brethren, Church,*

### *A short Catechism.*

*Church, and the like, and deny to communicate with them; as if baptism did not incorporate into Christ his body, and prepare for communion with him in his Ordinances,*

*Q. To what course of life doth your baptism bind you?*

*A. To depart from all iniquity; to devote my self, wholly to the Faith and Service of one God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to whom I am dedicated, and all my days to demean my self as a member of Christ his Church, one in Covenant with God, on whom holiness is stamped; and that is sanctified for approach to him.*

*Q. You spake of some benefit you reaped by your being baptized in infancy; is the early enjoyment of this Ordinance of any advantage?*

*A. Yes, very much in many things to be preferred before baptism of grown persons, wherein it is more profitable.*

*Q. What is the first benefit of infant baptism?*

*A. Infant baptism expresseth clearly the sin of nature; and engageth against it: in that we are washed, it is evident we are unclean; but being so soon baptized, doth witness our very nature is defiled; for infancy did never admit us to be stained with personal guilt as are men at years; and so Infant baptism is an unanswerable argument of our inbred corruption against which we are bound to fight, being baptized before it had spread it self into actual sin.*

*Q. What is the second benefit of Infant baptism?*

### *A short Catechism.*

*A.* It explaineth the method, and order of transmitting the covenant, and affecteth us with the benefit of Relation to a believing Parent: That we are baptized speaks us in covenant; but that we are so soon baptized before we have in our selves any qualification for it, shews us as branches, we partake of the fatness of the Olive, and are of the same kind with our Parents: God hath graciously become the God of the believer and his seed, and made grace to run through natures channel, otherwise we had never enjoyed this privilege.

*Q.* What is a third benefit of Infant baptism?

*A.* It enlargeth the bounds, and establisheth the being of the Church. Baptism is the band of union, and Ordinance of ingrafting into the Church: but *Infant baptism* doth scatter the holy seed, and send forth sprouting branches, which succeed into the room of old perishing stocks, doth not onely increase the number of the Churches Members, but defend it from the washing annihilating breaches of time.

*Q.* What is the fourth benefit of baptism?

*A.* It exciteh Repentance, representing sin in its Root and Original, the pravity of nature; and its gracious object, the God of our Fathers, and the God of our youth, against whom we have offended.

*Q.* What is the fifth benefit of Infant baptism?

*A.* It enforceth Faith, not onely in the sealing, but also the extending of the Covenant to the seed of believers, a ground of Parental Prayer for posterity, and an early seizure of our souls, before Satan could possess us, or our own corrupt nature could betray us unto him.

*Q.* What

## *A short Catechism.*

*Q. What is the sixth benefit of Infant baptism?*

*A. It engageth duty; Parents to Christian education and Instruction of those, who by their Authority are dedicated to the service of the true God; children to the obedience of the God of their Father, and of their youth, who extended to them the Covenant, and so soon set the Seal of it in their flesh.*

*Q. What is the seventh benefit of Infant baptism?*

*A. It encourageth under death, the knowledge of the Covenant extended unto beleivers and their seed, hath prepared young children unto Martyrdom; and interest in the Covenant can be the onely ground of hope to the Parents under the death of their infants, who are born the children of wrath, but by baptism are put into the ark of salvation; such as let go this must cheat themselves by a dream of Childrens immunity from all guilt, and so can not be damned: or a Popish *Limbus Infantum*, or some unusual way of comfort the Scripture doth not warrant.*

*Q. May not these benefits redound to such as are baptized in grown years?*

*A. No, in no wise, for such see not the extent of the Covenant to beleivers and their seed; nor the serviceableness of Relation natural in busineses of salvation; nor do they enjoy the same; and therefore it is our great happiness, that we are not onely baptized, but baptized in Infancy, under all the advantages that either Ordinance or season can afford us.*

## **FINIS.**







THE  
VERTUE and VALUE  
OF  
BAPTISME,  
DELIVERED

In a Summary Sermon at the close of  
the Catechetical Considerations of the  
Doctrine of Baptism, at *Botolphs*  
*Aldgate, LONDON.*

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TEXT.

Heb. 10. ver. 22. (the last words) — *And our bodies  
washed with pure water.*



HE Author of this Epistle, intending a  
Confirmation of the Christianized  
Jews, in the faith they had received,  
and administration of the Gospel, to  
which they were subjected; doth assert  
*Jesus Christ to be the true Messiah*; both in respect  
of

of Person, as he is *God-man-Mediator*; and his Offices, as *Prophet, Priest and King*, and opposeth him unto all those Levitical Rites, whereby he was typified; plainly declaring that the appearance of the Substance, but a period to all those Shadowy Ceremonies whereby they had worshipped God; and necessitated another manner of administration of Gods Covenant and Worship, fit to shew that *the Messiah was come, and no longer to be expected*. Which having by clear Demonstrations confirmed in the 19. verse of this Chapter, he enters upon the Application of this Doctrine, which he manageth by,

1. Stating the principle proved, as granted and agreed on, *vers. 19, 20, 21. Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh: And having an High Priest over the House of God.*

2. Special Inference of duty, *v. 22. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

In the Inference we are to note two things,

1. the Duty Inferred, *Let us draw near.*

2. The dictated qualifications of such as must draw near, and they are two, *The heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, the body washed with pure water.*

3. The directed manner of drawing nigh to God, *With a true heart, in the full assurance of faith.*

I intend not a full consideration, and therefore shall not insist on a full Commet upon the whole

whole verse, but confine my self onely to the words propounded; and we see they are the *Dictated quality* of such as are required to draw nigh to God upon the account of the High Priest, and liberty of entrance into the holy place; and therefore is to be Gramatically Read, Ἐρροσπρίντοι καὶ λελουμένοι προσχω-  
*usda*, we sprinkled, and washed, let us draw near, &c. and herein there is among Expositors no difference: but the difficulty is in the Interpretation of the words; many of our modern Expositors differing from the Antients in the same; the last understanding *the Sacrament of Baptism* to be the qualification here spoken of; the former, *External Sanctity*, by way of allusion unto Baptism:

The difference is not much, for if all *External Sanctity* be here intended, then *Baptism*, and if the order of Sanctity be to be observed, *that first*, as it where *External Sanctity* must begin, yet my judgment leads me to the interpretation of the Antients, and such later Expositors as follow their steps; and so I understand by the body washed with pure water, *the person Baptized* or qualified by due subjection to the Sacrament of Baptism, and hereunto I am guided, *by the opposition of it, to the heart sprinkled*, which intends the real Sanctification of the whole man; and is so interpreted in the 9. Chap. 14. vers. whilst the washing of the body signified *External Sanctification*, always in use among the Jews, and is sould by the Apostle, Eph. 5. 26. *Sanctified by the washing of water*; as Expositors do agree, the opposition in this Text seems to me, to distinguish the inward grace, and outward sign in dictating the Gospel order of access to God, *to be by Baptism of*  
 B 2 *water*

*water on the body ; and blood , or Grace on the heart : and is the same with that in I Pet. 3. 21. Baptism that now is , saves us , not the washing of water , but the answer of a good conscience .*

2. *By the occasion of this quality , which seems to me to have been the preventing answer of an objection , that might well be propounded by the Jews thus , You have put a period to all holy Rites , and laid all the administrations of the Covenant according to Moses in the dust , and tell us positively that they which serve the Tabernacle must not eat at your Altar , ( Heb. 13. 10 ) nor enjoy with you the Priviledges of Grace ; we well know God is a Holy God , and will be sanctified in such as approach unto him ; and the uncircumcised in heart or in flesh may not come nigh unto him , Ezek. 44. 9. nor enter into his sanctuary ; what order or outward ordinance of sanctification is then prescribed in our approaches to God ? To which the Apostle answereth instead of Circumcision of heart and flesh under the old , you must according to the direction of the new Covenant and the Gospel-worship , draw near to God with an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience , and a body washed with pure water , which will be to you a ground of full assurance , which all the Ceremonies of the Law could not create unto you .*

The words seem not to me to be at all strained into this sence ; but of their own selves by a genuine interpretation , thus to speak , that the *outward sign and inward Grace of Baptism* are the onely qualifications of such as will in full assurance of faith draw nigh to God in Gospel-administrations , and the priviledges of the New Covenant ;

## *The Vertue and Value of Baptism.*

5

In this sense and exposition I stand not alone, for *Aretius* saith expressly, *Corpora Nostra debent esse abluta aqua pura, hoc est, Baptismo Christi debemus esse initiati*: Our bodies washed with pure waters; that is, we ought to be initiated by the Baptism of Christs appointment. And *Paræus* saith, *Intelligimus nos intus sanguine & Spiritu Christi purgari, foris quod Baptismo ablui corporibus: ad Sacramentum enim Baptismi Apostolus respicere videtur*: Par. in loc. We understand an inward sprinkling of the conscience with the blood and Spirit of Christ, and an outward washing the body by Baptism; for the Apostle looks on Baptism.

The words thus explained, do plainly present to our observation, and consideration, this point of Doctrine.

*Doctr. Baptism, or washing of the body with pure water, is a special qualification that fits us for confident approach to God.*

In the prosecution of this Doctrine, I shall explain, confirm, and apply it with all convenient brevity.

In the explication we are to enquire what is Baptism?

2. What 'tis to approach to God with confidence?

For the first, I shall not stand upon the acceptations of the word *Baptism*, nor trouble you with the various senses in which 'tis used: but taking it in its vulgar acceptation, as it denominates a Gospel Ordinance and eminent piece of Gods worship, you may receive of it this description.

*Baptism*



*Baptism is a Solemn and Religious application of water, by a lawful Minister, to a fit subject; to the signifying of the blood of Christ, and its cleansing property; and to the sealing of the Covenant of Grace.*

In this description I will not trouble you with a logical distribution of it, into its parts but propound these conclusions as helpful to your understanding of it.

Conclusion 1. *Water is the outward sign, and matter of Baptism; water and no other Element; pure water without popish mixture, or Composition with Oyl, Cream, Spittle, or the like: for this, and this onely Element the Lord appointed; and his appointment stamps on the use of it, Dignity and Authority; and justly checks the curiosity of such as are subject to contemn the simplicity of the Element, and advance the dignity of the ordinance by their own dull, but daring inventions: and yet water being an Element, cooling heat, quenching thirst, of common use, and easie purchase, and cleansing all filthiness; doth fitly represent unto our minds the cooling and refreshing efficacy, the plenty and easie purchase, together with the purifying property of the blood of Christ.*

Conclus. 2. *A solemn and religious application of the water must be the form of Baptism; That water be applied to the Subject is the essential act of Baptism; the manner of its application, by dipping or sprinkling, is to be guided by discretion, and conveniency; though we deny not dipping to have been used in the Primitive Churches, in the hot Eastern Countries, where with safety and conveniencie it might be used; and we grant (all other things concurring)*  
*dipping*

*dipping* to be a lawful application of the water ; yet it is not *essentially* and indispensably *necessary*, as the Anabaptists do too zealously contend : but it is both lawful and sufficient that the water be *poured or sprinkled* on the Subject ; this hath been the allowed practise of the Church ; and the word *Baptize*, *signifying* any kind of washing, by sprinkling, pouring on, or dipping ; and the measure, or quantity of water being no more essentiall to Baptism then of Bread and Wine to the Lords Supper, will allow it ; and the Holy Ghost mentioneth the blood of Christ as cleansing, by *sprinkling*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. by way of allusion to this Act in Baptism, as the analogy thereof : and it is more then probable that Baptism in houses, as was that of the Jaylors, *Act.* 16. 33. was administred by sprinkling or pouring on, not by dipping ; and the weakness of children, and coldness of our climate is a just Reason for this manner of Application ; so that either of these may be used without contention

Water what way soever, must be *Solemnly and religiously applyed* : in the holy form, and with the holy Rites which God hath appointed ; and will none other, for every common washing or application is not *Baptism* : but *water consecrated* by the word of institution and prayer ; and as an *act of worship to God, and argument of faith* applied in the name (that is by the appointment, and to the dedication of the person baptised to faith in, and holy profession) of *Father Son and Holy Ghost* ; is the Sacrament of Baptism : so that as the Apostle doth well check the horrid prophaneness of such as deemed the common Eating of Bread, and Drinking of Wine to be

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be the Lords Supper, by declaring *The Cup of blessing which we blesse* is the Communion of the blood of Christ, and *the Bread which we break* is the Communion of the body of Christ, 1 Cor. 10. 16. thereby pointing unto the solemn and Religious Rites which must distinguish the Lords Supper from common eating and drinking; so the Solemn and Religious Application of water distinguisheth the Sacrament of Baptism from all other common washing.

Conclus. 3. *Baptisme must be administred by a lawful Minister*; this water may not be applied by every or any private hand; the Lord Jesus hath joyned it in Commission *with teaching and discipling*, so that such only that have the Authority of the one have the Authority of the other; Baptism is on all hands agreed on to be an *act of office* and Authority, and not to be given by men out of office; it is a *Seal* which must be *stamped* (not by a childish impression: but) *with Power and Authority* to make it valid, a *ground of faith*, pleadable in prayer; so that the Baptism of women and private persons (on what pretended necessity soever it be) is *wicked and prophane*; nay, in my judgement is *void and null*, and not to be salved with a *quod fieri non debuit factum valet*, that *unlawful things are valid when past and done*; though I cannot with the Donatists grant that the *efficacy* of the Ordinance depends on the *dignity* of the Administrator; yet I cannot but believe that the *Authority of the Institutor* is essential to every Gospel-Ordinance to the Church, and must be found in every Administrator thereof; *Ordained Ministers* must give us Sacraments, I and preach  
the

the Word too ; if we will not be cheated of Salvation, and content our selves with mock Ordinances ; my muddy brains could never yet conceive the God of Order to make *Office and Authority* essential to political transactions in Kingdoms and Commonwealths ; and yet to leave his Church in such confusion, that the great Affairs of Salvation shall be dispensed by every common hand, as if his care were more for the world than the Church ; which if it be, I will never go to the House of God to behold the beauty of his Holiness, which shines more brightly in the wide Wilderness.

Conclus. 4. *Baptisme must be administred unto fit subjects :* all Subjects sute not the Ordinance ; Creatures insensible and irrational are incapable of the Grace of God, and these holy Administrations thereof ; the baptizing of Bells, Churches, Fonts, &c. is a piece of Consecration, neither prescribed nor allowed in the New Testament ; but to be damned as prophane and superstitious ; they must be the subjects of Life and Reason that will lie in the least Capacity of Grace and Holiness, and such are the *Sons of men*.

*Sons of men* are Subjects capable of Grace and Holiness : but the special dispensations thereof in the Covenant of Grace, and its Seals, call for special qualifications ; and therefore Baptism may not be given to *men as men*, and meerly the *sons of Adam*, no, they must first be the *seed of Abraham*, Gen. 17. 13. *for the Covenant of God must be in their flesh*, and by Preaching they must be *discipled* into the Christian Church, and see that the *Promise is to them and to their Children* before they be Baptized,

*Act. 2. 38, 39. for Baptism must be the Seal of the righteousness of faith, which we have being not yet Baptized, Rom. 4. 11. so that the fit Subjects for Baptism must be not only Men, but Federati, such as Covenant with God, to whom the Promise may be judged to belong: they must be made Christians, and lay hold on the Covenant of God, and then be Baptised; I could desire to drive out of your common discourse an ordinary term relating to Baptism (viz. such an one is Christened) if I did not hope you well understand it: Baptism may Christianum dicere, declare and pronounce a man a Christian: but it doth not Christianum facere, make a Christian; if your Children be not made Christians by the extent of the Covenant to believers and their seed, bring them not to me to be Baptized. Most cursedly prophane was the cruelty of the Spanish Papiests in America, who with whips and scourges drove the unchristianized, untaught Indians, to the Fonts to be Baptized; for that Baptism belongs to none but Christs Disciples, and Covenant-People.*

*Baptism belongs to all Christs Disciples, and Gods Covenant-People: so that none of them may without sin, nay sacrilege, be barred from Baptism; and these are resolved into two ranks, and known by two names in the Church (viz.) Infidels converted to the faith, and the Infants of one or both Christian Parents: These two are the orders into which Gods federates have been Ranked, ever since Gods Covenant was established, and his Church was estated, in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed:*



As to the first of these, they are on all hands consented to, as fit and proper Subjects : only our over-pious age hath started the query, How and when they must be judged converted to the faith ? which I must needs resolve to be by a *profession of saving faith*, not the *saving Profession of faith*, and *possession of sincere Grace* ; which the Congregating Anabaptists call for : *sincere grace* and *saving Profession* must be the souls care, and ground of joy ; but cannot be the sign that shall guide the Church in giving the Sacrament of baptism ; *as soon as they professed to believe, Philip Preaching the things of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women*, Act. 8. 12. Philip required no more of the Eunuch in v. 37. And when I hear Peter declared *Simon* the Sorcerer to be after his baptism in the Gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, as v. 23. I perceive they in whose company he was baptized yielded no more ; and when I remember *Ananias* and *Saphira*, *Demas*, and other baptized persons proved hypocrites and reprobates ; I cannot believe they possessed *sincere Grace*, or made a *saving Profession* ; though they professed *saving Faith* : I cannot yet turn *Arminian* and believe true Grace, may be finally and totally lost ; and a man may be a child of God to day, and a child of the Devil to morrow ; I have not faith enough to believe that when God made me a *Minister*, he made me a *God*, and endowed me with the power and property of searching the heart : nor have I wit enough to conceive that God making me a Steward of his Mysteries, prescribes to me as my guide the qualification of subjects, which lies be-



yond my knowledge. I believe the grosse enormities of many baptized Saints (as they call themselves) hath convinced them, that true Grace is not within their sight, but they may and have baptized hypocrites : why then do they call for that qualification God hath not directed and they cannot discern ?

God hath made the tongue the trumpet of the heart, and I can better hope men will not play the hypocrite and make that utter an uncertain sound, them I can know the *sincerity* of their Grace.

Though Infidels converted to the Faith be generally resolved within the Covenant, yet since the days of *Balthazar Pacimontanus* (who pretending to have derived his fancy from *Luther*, constrained *Luther* to write against him in the year of our Lord, 1527.) The Right of *Infants* to the Covenant of God, and consequently their capacity for *baptism* hath been called in question ; and of late years hath met with most high and violent (though irrational and unscriptural) opposition : wherein I cannot but admire at the erroneous induslry of the *Antipedobaptists*, to curtail Gods Covenant ; cut off their seed from the priviledges of Grace ; and cast away their own reasons, blinding their eyes against plain demonstrations of Scripture, and the Antient enjoyments of the Church, for which we must see better warrant before we strike hands with them, and be of their uncharitable belief ; for if I know any thing of the method of Gods Covenant, or in the least how to Reason from Scriptures, It is as clear as the Sun that *the Infants of believing Parents*, Gods Covenant People, *whilst Infants*, and as their  
natural

*natural seed* are Gods *federates*, and within his Covenant, and so fit Subjects of baptism:

In political and all civil transactions of men, we find all the world over, that Covenants made from, or to parents, do usually include *children* as their *children*, so that by that very *relation*, without any new formal contract, they claim *Priviledges*, and stand bound to *duty*; and when I consider Gods way of dealing in his Church, to be according to mans capacity, and humane method; I have no ground on which to imagine that he hath inverted the order, and cut off Relation in the conveying of the priviledges of Grace, and constituting a peculiar People to himself; for Gods special dispensations do ordinarily run in the same Channel, though not with the same Latitude, that his General Providences do: and then when God after the manner of men assumes to himself a Kingdom, without doubt he confers Honours on, and looks for Loyalty from, his subjects, and their seed or offspring, who as their seed are born heirs of such Honour and Duty.

Further in all the transactions of God with man ever since he had a being; the Covenant of grace hath extended to his *seed*, as *his seed*, without any personal qualification; all that know any thing of Gods dealing with *Adam*, know the Covenant of works was made to him for himself, and his *seed* as they were his *natural seed*; he received priviledges for himself and them, and so he lost them; and by one *mans disobedience we are all made sinners*; if this were Gods method in the Covenant of works, we must have good reasons to make us believe

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lieve it is altered in the extent and Administration of the Covenant of Grace : but not to stand on generalequity and demonstrations, the Scripture doth by plain and clear instances in both old and new Testament, evidence the *children* of men under the Covenant of grace, to be also in Covenant as they are their *natural issue*: there is nothing plainer in Scripture then that when the Covenant of Grace was established in *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, it was extended to their natural seed; *their children, as their children even in infancy*, and before they attained to any *Personal qualifications* were *in Covenant*, and the children of God : this is expressed in the very form of the Covenant, *Gen. 17. 7. I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee*: This is evidenced by *Circumcision*, the Seal of the Covenant set in their flesh on this very ground, and that at *eight days old*, whilst *Infants*, unable to any personal acts of *Abrahams* faith.

It must needs be most gross ignorance to say that *Circumcision* Sealed to the natural issue of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* the Land of *Canaan* and promise thereof, but not the Covenant of Grace; whilst the matter sealed, and very ground on which every man-child must be Circumcised, is expressly declared to be, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed*; whilst the Holy Ghost tels us *Circumcision* was the *Seal of the Righteousness of Faith*, which is the Covenant of Grace, *Rom. 4. 11.* and *Circumcision* was set on the flesh of the *Profelited Gentiles*, who never claimed nor possessed by the vertue thereof, any portion of *Canaan* the land of *Promise*, so that if this were the onely matter Sealed by *Circumcision*, it did to them

Seal

Seal a blank, and they had by it no benefit ; again, God doth lay an eminent claim to the natural issue of the Jews, in their very apostacies from him, when he calls them out of *Egypt*, he doth it with an especial claim, *let my people go*, *Exod. 5. 1.* when he chargeth them with duty, he enforces it with relation, *ye are the children of the Lord your God*, *Deut. 14. 1.* when he chides their abominable Idolatry, he aggravates it by the sacrifice, owning his own Title, *Thou hast taken thy Sons and thy daughters which thou hast born unto me, and sacrificed, &c.* Thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire, in *Ezek. 16. 20, 21.* When he chastiseth them, he comes to them as a Father, *To children of Israel you only have I known as mine*, therefore I will visit you for your iniquities, *Amos. 3. 1, 2.* and when he comes to deliver them from afflictions, their sins provoke to continue ; the Covenant made with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, is the onely cogent reason thereunto ; this is pleaded as the prevalent argument and ground of faith in prayer, *Exod. 32. 14. Isa. 64. 9.* And affectionately resented by the Lord, *Levit. 26. 42. Ezek. 16. 59, 60. I might deal with thee as thou hast done when thou didst despise the Oath in breaking the Covenant, nevertheless I will remember my Covenant made with thee in the days of thy youth* ; when I consider this carriage of God toward *Israel*, according to the flesh, I cannot without blasphemy, but think God to be more just then to lay such a special claim under the series of his dispensation towards *Israel*, if by his Covenant with their Fathers he had not a clear and unquestionable Title to the posterity :

It

It is to me a most senseless and dull evasion, to say that *Israel* were Gods people by right of Creation, as *Wool*, and *Hemp*, and *Flax* are his, whilst he himself tells us, he had chosen them to be a precious people unto himself, above all people that are upon the earth, *Deut.* 14. 2. and you onely have I known above all the families of the Earth: *Amos* 3. 2. Where doth God say of any Nation they are my people, *Israel* excepted; and is not the transmission of the Covenant to the Gentiles, that which makes them who were not a people, to be the people of the living God? and unto this it may further be added that our Saviour in the very rejection of the Jews, when he declares them to be of their father the Devil, denieth them not to be the children of *Abraham* (*John* 8.) nay, declareth them to be children in the Right to the grace he brought in o the World; in comparision of whom the Gentiles are called *Dogs*, *Mat.* 15. 26. Nay, and owns them as children of the Kingdom of Heaven, *Mat.* 8. 11. And *St. Paul* lamenting the rejection of his Kinsfolk, aggravates their present miserie, by their past mercies, Reckoning up their priviledges *Adoption*, *Glory*, *Covenants*, *Oracles*, the giving of the Law, the Service of God, the promises, the fathers, and coming of *Christ* concerning the flesh, (but not a word of *Canaan*, the great dreamed of Priviledge in *Anabaptist* view) and determines these belonged not to *Israel* heirs of *Abrahams* faith, but to *Israel* his kinsfolk according to the flesh, even the natural issue of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*.

By all this, and much more that hath been said by others, and might be by me, it is more then manifest, that during the dispensations of the Covenant under



under the Law, and to the Jews the children of Gods Covenant People, even as their children, and without personal acts of faith were in Covenant with God, and subjects capable of the initiating Seal thereof; and methinks under the Gospel if (as undoubtedly it is) the Covenant be substantially the same, though ministerially different: men should have more reason, then to release such a priviledge, without a very plain and clear reversal in the New Testament, and limitation of the Covenant to adult and actual believers; which my dimme sight could never see, read, nor dull brain conceive: and more justice to themselves and Posterity, then (if it be at their choice) to change a Fee-farm to themselves and heirs for ever, for a Lease for a term of life, and meer personal title; sure I am, my little honesty would act me with such foolish self love: more regard to the rejected Jew, who are yet the beloved of God according to Election for the Fathers sake, Rom. 11. 28. And in hope to be Re-planted into the Olive from which they were cut off; can we with any confidence court them to a new Covenant with straiter terms? shall we not earnestly emulate and highly provoke them to receive the Gospel, by bidding them to their losse? will not ingenuity engage them thus to retort? *Why do you perswade me to turn Christian? as I am a Jew I beget children to the Lord, and bring forth an Holy seed; the Priviledges of the Covenant is entailed on me, and on my Natural issue, and therefore the Covenant of God is set on the flesh of my child as soon as born; whereas if I turn Christian, I bring forth children of wrath, and beget children to the God of the World: I have indeed*



*a Personal right to the Covenant, and am provided for during my own life, but my children are turned into the wide world, to sink or swim, and shift for themselves, without any special Divine Protection; is not a poor pittance with perpetuity better then more large enjoyments with so short a tenure? never tell me of a better Testament on such tickle terms.: O the hopes! the hopes of England to convert the late inlet Jews their new inhabitants! by such narrow and Honourable treaty, and tenders of Grace and Salvation.*

Me thinks men calling themselves Saints should have more *Religion* then to restrain the Grace God hath extended to themselves and seed; and curtail the Covenant that by the New Testament is conferred on the Believer and his issue natural, even as his child in infancy, and before he acts any Personal faith: when I consider *little infants* sucking the breasts, and brought in armes, not able to go, received by our Lord Jesus Christ by him blessed and pronounced with others of the like kind to be of *the Kingdom of Heaven*; and propounded not only as examples of meekness and humility, but as *objects of charity and observation, not to be offended*, but awfully received because Christs name is placed on them, and they are made his disciples, so as that the receiving such a little child must be deemed the receiving of Christ; and the offending one of these little ones, a dolor more dangerous *then a milstone hanged about his neck and being cast into the Sea*; Mat. 18. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Mark. 10. 14. Luk. 18. 16.

And when I consider the Apostles position of that latitude of Sanctity, not only to the Jews the natural

ral branches, but the Christianized Gentiles accidental branches, wilde by nature, but ingrafted in, and partaking of the fatness of the Olive, plainly affirming of both, *if the first fruits were holy, so is the whole lump; if the root be holy, so is the branches,* Rom. 11. 16. Hereby the was observe that from these priviledges, the natural branches were, and accidentally may be cut off.

Lastly, When I consider the Apostles clear and serious resolve to the case of conscience propounded by the *Corinthians*, concerning their children born of an Infidel (not adulterous parent) *else were your children unclean, but now are they holy,* 1 Cor. 7. 14. The Anabaptist will not let us understand in this place *Real holiness*, nor do we desire it; and until that they have made it to appear that faith is essential to marriage (which will put marriage in a good tendency to a Sacrament, and please the Church of *Rome*) it is too ridiculous to understand a *natural holiness*, I mean Legitimacy and acquittance from the blot of Bastardy, and then I am constrained to understand a *Fœderal holiness* in the extent of the Covenant and esteem of the Church. These things, I say, consider'd, I must pluck up my reason by the very root if I do not by undeniable consequence constrain my conscience to beleive and preach this point of Doctrine, (*viz.*) *In New-Testament times, under the Gospel administration of the Covenant of Grace, the natural issue, or infants of beleving Parents are in Covenant with God, and under the promises of Salvation.* And when I look upon *Peters* encouragement to the converting Jews to beleive & be baptised, *for the promise is to you and to your children, even to all that are as far*

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off, as many as the Lord our God should call, Act. 2. 38, 39. I must renounce my Grammer and little skill in reading plain English, with the least of understanding, if I do not read, *Believing Jews and their children, and also believing Gentiles and their children, have that interest in the promise that may be to them a ground of faith, and confer on them a Right to Baptism.* And the Anabaptist gloss that the promise was of extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost (for these are not extended to all that are afar off when God doth call them, nor created they any right to Baptism, for many time they followed this Sacrament) or that children, when called to the faith of the Parent, should have the right to the promise (for that is to them as called, nor as children. And my mind is very foggy, I am much out, if this term of *Relation* do not dictate a priviledge and Propriety by vertue of relation which children of such parents as children should enjoy, above what children of other parents did or could enjoy) is too short a Fescue to make me read otherwise.

Thus then it doth fully and plainly appear, that under Old and New Testament administrations of the Covenant of Grace, the infants of believing parents are *Fæderati* within the Covenant, and so fit and proper subjects of Baptism to be Baptized. Nor is their incapacity of making a vocal profession of faith any bar to their Baptism, for profession simply creates no rite to Baptism, I never read the Devil was Baptized; and I beleive the Dipping Saints will not now baptize him; yet he really believed, and more then once professed, That Jesus Christ was the Son of God. Profession as an *evidence of Covenant-interest,*

*interest*, was the Churches guide to Baptism ; and the Scripture giving another demonstration of *Covenant-interest*, viz. *Decent from believing Parents* ; that is also to be regarded, and the one to be no bar to the other , but both in their place gives due direction, who are *foederates*, and to be Baptized.

Nor is the Argument of any more force because the Scripture mentioneth *vocal profession*, and Baptisme upon it, but passeth the other in silence ; for *occasional and circumstantial actions* are no binding precedents, or universal direction to the Church of God : the Church is founded in *grown persons*, whose *Covenant-interest* can be known no otherwise but by vocal profession ; but it may be edified by *infant-Branches*, who by a course of nature partake of the fatness of the Olive, having the birth-right of the Covenant : thus it was with *Abraham* and his issue, and so with us. 2. Where the *general nature of the Covenant*, with a long and particular exercise thereof doth dictate, there needs no particular explicate directions : God in his wisdom designing our right understanding and rational improvement of the Covenant, and our reverend esteem of the old Testament, in its use and necessity to the Christian Church, representing unto us the order of the administration of the Covenant and circumcision, refers us thither for direction concerning Baptism ; and we must needs in reason see that the change of a meer Rite or Ceremony under the continuation of the substance, and same Covenant ; will never admit a change of the subjects to be sealed.

Last of all, *Infants inability to action* is no bar to their baptism; because it voids not their interest in the Covenant: and the Sacrament is such wherein they are to be meerly passive. When I observe God to have appointed the Initiating Seal of Initiating grace, to be such where men of the greatest activity are altogether Passive; he seems to me to suggest these shall not act in their admission into the Church, and receiving of my covenant; that inability to action may be no bar or hindrance to such as have no less interest in the covenant; and onely *Covenant-interest* shall make capable of the Seal.

Let not any Antipædobaptist think to amaze us by crying, Why, Sir, on this ground infants may have a right to the Lords Supper, for we say so too; they have *jus ad rem*, though not *jus in re*, their right is not denied, though present incapacity hinders their enjoyment.

These things considered, we must tell the Anabaptist, That infants right to the covenant, and enjoyment of the initiating Seal, having been continued throughout the old World under the Law without the least controul, and also under the Gospel for more then 1600. years; without any General interruption or the least disturbance; until within this 200. years, we must find better warrant to divest us of it, before we part with it; and our antiquity (on so clear a Title) in the enjoyment, methinks should be no mean argument to ingenuity; for we say in this case as *Jephthah* to the King of *Ammon*, Judges 11. 26. *When Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, in Aroer and her towns, and in all the Cities of Arnon three hundred years, why did ye not then re-*

cover



cover them in that space? so whilst infant right to the Covenant, and initiating Seal dwelt in *Judea*, and her towns, in *Asia* and her towns, and in all the cities of the Church of God, and the borders thereof 2000 years, why did you not recover them in that space? surely now you may despair of ever doing it; how much soever you disturbe our peace, we will never part with this priviledge.

Conclus. 5. *The signifying of the blood of Christ with its effects, and the sealing of the Covenant of Grace is the end of Baptism*; Baptism is both a sign and Seal to excite our thoughts, and affect our mind with the blood of Jesus, and assure our hearts of a right unto the Priviledges of the Covenant, so as to argue them to our soul as grounds of faith on which we are to urge God in prayer: herein it agreeth with other Sacraments, and in special circumcision, into whose place and end it hath succeeded; in that it is a *sign and Seal of the righteousness of faith*, Rom. 4. 11. And so the analogy between water in all its properties, and the blood of Christ doth clearly hold, and the Scripture doth plainly attribute *Remission, Sanctification, Regeneration, and Salvation* to the outward sign or act of baptism, as the graces to be brought to our minds, and made sure to our souls thereby; Mark 16. 16. Acts 2. 38. Ephes. 5. 26. Titus 3. 3. I Pet. 3. 21.

Baptism is not onely a Seal from God to us as a *ground of faith*: but also from us to God as a *reason of duty*: our subjection to it is an actual confederation with God, that we will be called by his Name, live as his servants in all obedience to his will; so that hereby we are bound to beleive in Christ, and forsake,



forfake, nay fight against sin: this the Apostle dictates when he demands of the *Corinthians*, directing them to joynt advancement of Christ, *into whose name were ye baptized?* 1 Cor. 1. 13. And Peter aggravates the Apostasie of Christians, nay non-proficiency in Grace with this, *They have forgot they were washed from their old sins*, 2 Pet. 1. 9. Baptism will be a monument of perfidy against profane Christians to all Eternity, and aggravate their misery: so that although baptism do not convey Grace *opere operato*, by the meer work, or by any Physical natural power that is in it self, yet it is a moral instrument, by contemplation to be rationally improved to the affecting of our hearts with our own uncleanness, and the blood of Christ; Gods mercy to us, and our duty to him: nor is it *nudum signum* a meer sign to excite our thoughts, but also a *real Seal*, Gods holy Ordinance, Creating to all baptized, a Right to the Covenant, by rational acts of faith to be argued, to their own joy and duty, and pleaded to God in Prayer; so that these priviledges being not possessed by all baptized, springs not from any defects in the Ordinance, but neglect in the subjects: if men will not claim by a conferred title and visible Seal, they deservedly lose their interest.

Here note that I have not wit enough to conceive that the *end of the Sacrament makes against Infant-baptism*; for Infants are capable of Right though not of claime and possession, and baptism is given as a *ground*, not *effect* of Christian claim; I see no reason why Infants may not be *sealed* in the cradle, as well as *Crowned* in the mothers belly; nor is there any force in the confederation of the baptized, unless

less it must needs be actively and cannot be passively done ; I conceive *parental power* in dedication to God , and the *Sovereign nature of the Covenant* imposing on the party Sealed, the condition to be by him performed, at well as sealing the comforts to be enjoyed , doth fully enforce the confederation of such as are at present non-agents : It will be a hard matter to make me believe that Gods condescension, hath lost his authority any more in the Covenant of Grace, then in the Covenant of Works ; or that Infants are not as capable of confederation by baptism, as they were by circumcision.

I have done with the first thing, to shew you what baptism is, and now come to the second, to shew what is here meant by *confident approach* :

*Approach to God is the act of a baptized soul*, and it is done either by *the preception of faith*, which is the evidence of things not seen, and substance of things hoped for, *Heb. 11. 1.* This is that personal and private act of the soul whereby it seeth and saluteth God at a distance, with sighs and groans which cannot be uttered, and giveth an assent unto truth apprehended, which is or cannot be expressed ; and hereby we deny not the *unbaptized*, in extraordinary causes, where the body cannot be washed by pure water ; as in an *Indian Country* remote from the Church, or in the Church, under a limited order and season of baptizing, as it was in some Churches in primitive times, when they baptized but twice in a year, may draw nigh to God ; no doubt but the *Catechumeni*, such as learned their Catechism in order unto baptism, had sweet communion with God alone ; whilst they wanted Com-

munion with the Church ; otherwise they had never been able to endure Martyrdom.

2. Or *by possession of glory*, when the Soul departing out of the body returns to God who gave it, and is received into *Abraham's bosom*, or eternal blisse in the presence of God for ever ; and this I deny not may be, and doubt not is enjoyed by many *unbaptized* ; I can neither with some *Anabaptists* grant that *all that dye in infancy*, and before stained with actual guilt are *certainly saved* ; I see no warrant for it, nor yet with the *Papists* do I think all that die *unbaptized* are damned : I believe baptism is necessary by reason of Gods command, and as the ordinary Ark or means of salvation ; and so the sinful contempt or neglect of it to be damnable ( though I will not determine God will charge it on the the helpless infant ) yet I see not its necessity to be so absolute, that providence superseding the Ordinance by unseasonable death, sets the soul under inevitable condemnation ; I have confidence to meet many an uncircumcised *Israelite* in Heaven, who died before the eighth day of his age ; and if in any, in this case God will have *mercy and not Sacrifice*.

3: Or *by the presentation of duty* ; and performance of publick devoire in the Tabernacle of the Lord, going up with his Saints, worshipping in his Sanctuary, and in the Assemblies of his People in all the parts of Gods Worship ; this is an *appearing before God in Sion* : and a *drawing nigh unto him in his holy place*, not to be admitted to the *uncircumcised* among the Jews ; nor *unbaptized* among Christians : this unto me seems to be the drawing nigh intended in the Text, and is that I intend in the Doctrine  
(viz.)

(viz.) That the Levitical Rites being abolished, and the way of access to God is now by Gospel Ordinances; they that will use them, must begin at *baptism*, and first have *their bodies washed with pure Water*, and be thereby made members of the body or Church of Christ, and be consecrated unto God; without which such as have the charge of Gods Holy things, must keep them from intermedling with them.

*Confidence* is the adjunct quality of this act of approach to God, and stands opposite unto the *tremblings, and despondency of the uncircumcised Gentiles*, who could expect no other but rejection and displeasure in their approach to God; for that they were *aliens and strangers to the Commonwealth of Israel, without God, and without hope in the World*, Eph. 2. 11, 12. Positively forbidden approach to God and the use of his Holy things? Ezek. 44. 9. *And to the terrors of the circumcised Jews*, who though admitted into Gods presence, were yet kept at a distance, and might not enter the *Holy of Holies* in their own persons, but by their High Priest; but now such was the priviledges of *Believers*, and the advantage of *baptism*, that the *baptized* might not only enter the sanctuary, whence the *uncircumcised* were excluded, but also the *Holy of Holies*, not made with hands, but eternal in the Heavens: so that they who by baptism have *their body washed* in the outward sign, and *their hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience*, the inward Grace of this ordinance, are required to shake off all *fears and doubts*, and to encourage themselves to the enjoyment of all Ordinances, and discharges of all duties whereby they may walk with God,

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and hold communion with him ; for that they are the persons so qualified as that the Church must not only admit them to outward acts of worship, but also a liberty of inward adoration (by the nearest approach they can possibly make to God) is their priviledge : to them is given full assurance of ready acceptance ; for the way is open to the *holiest*, the *Vale* is rent, the *High-Priest* gone before, and the liberty left common to all such (though none but such) as having their *hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*, and their *bodies washed with pure water* do draw nigh to the same : both these are necessary qualifications : for, an approach to God without an heart *sprinkled*, must needs be diffident, and full of doubts ; and without a body *washed*, dreadful and full of horror.

The Text and Doctrine you have had explained, and you see the point of Doctrine plainly asserting, *That Baptism or the body washed with pure water, is the especial qualification that must fit us for an approach to God.*

The next thing to be done is to prove the Doctrine, and it is in it self a truth so plain, that none that understand any thing of the method of Gospel-worship, and the necessity of outward acts, and body-qualifications in approaches to an holy God, but do subscribe unto the truth of it. Indeed the late spiritual Chymists, who have by our late overlarge liberty of conscience, (I mean sinful toleration,) had the boldness to blaspheme all Gods holy ordinances, and under a pretence of spirituality, to nullifie all outward acts of worship and qualifications to duty, have denied it : and the late intruder into this place, hath openly decried the necessity of this qualifi-



qualification in access to God, offering the liberty of Church Communion, and the priviledges of the Covenant to such as never passed under *water Baptism*, as if the order of the Gospel were now inverted, and Gods Ordinances not capable of profanation; or the *answer of a good conscience*, *real grace*, were obvious to every eye that hath the charge of holy things, and is a Steward of the Misteries of Salvation; I shall therefore briefly enforce this plain, and generally acknowledged truth with these commonly known observations; as the reasons thereof.

Reas. 1. *Baptism prepared the way of the Messiah, or Christ his appearance in, and approach to the Church*: the qualification that fits the Church for Christ his approach to her, fits the Church for approach to Christ or God; for these are reciprocal, the one goes not without a return of the other, and the same qualification must be in both; for that holy Majesty is present, *Holiness is in the Assembly of the Saints*, when God comes to his people, as well as in Heaven when his people come to him: and all that will walk in this consuming fire and meet this Messiah, and be made fit to enjoy him, must not onely have the *heart sprinkled*, but also the *body washed with pure water*; *Baptism* is the sanctification of the People, directed to prepare them for Gods appearance in Mount Sion: the voice of the grand Herald crying in the wilderness, *prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths strait*, Mat. 3. *Repent and be Baptised*: The Mace of Majesty born by the Messenger of the Messiah to strike aw in, and require subjection from the expectants of his coming, was the *Baptism of amendment*



*ment of life* : The levelling Engine that pulled down and made plain all mountainy and proud hearts that withstood the coming of Christ in his first appearance was Baptism : insomuch that the Scribes and Pharisees who rejected the counsell of God against themselves not being Baptized, are all along branded as Enemies, who would not have Christ reign over them : in a word, the promised and prophesied *Elias*, who was to come before the Lord to prepare his way ; is from his preparative work (which is plainly declared to have been Preaching and Baptizing) denominated *John the Baptist* : and the way of the Lord thus prepared is proclaimed as a ground of confidence to the Church, *Isa. 40. 3, 9, 11.* So that if the way of the Messiah his appearance must be the way of the Churches approach to him : as it is evident it must, in that baptism did not onely precede, but also follows his appearance, for *John the Baptist* did not onely prepare for his coming, but ever since his ascension his Ministers do go *teach and Baptize* into the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; Baptism hath ever been the *Discipling form*, method of matriculation in his School ; and incorporation into his body ; and solemn consecration unto communion with him of all such as were *afar off*, but are now *made nigh* ; even the people of the living God ; their *Baptism* is the qualification that fits for a confident approach to God, without which we cannot be assured of acceptance.

Real. 2. *Baptism prepared Jesus Christ unto the work of Mediatorship* : The way of access to God is the same for the people as priest ; for the Head as  
Mem-

Members; for the Church as for Christ : the Mediatour as Man must manifest himself holy in all things ; not onely in an immunity from all positive acts of sin, but also a positive performance of all duty ; he becomes in all things obedient unto the Father ; lives in Communion with the Church, and is conform to all holy Ordinances ; proclaiming himself a member of the Church, before he propose himself a mediator for, or to the Church ; *he is Baptised* because it thus became him to *fulfil all righteousness*, by his subjection to Ordinances, and thereby suiring himself for his work : he doth not onely shew but sanctifie them to be the way of access to the Father ; for he as our High-priest hath left open the same way of proach ; and as the Captain hath marched in the same steps of Salvation in which we are to follow him ; and we shall find him *Baptized*, and so immediately entring on the exercise of his Mediatorship : when (and not till then) he was Baptized, he is *solemnly inaugurated into his office*, coming out of the water, the Spirit came visibly on him, and the voice was heard, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear him.* We never read of his praying, preaching, and combate with the Devil till he was Baptized, and no sooner *was he Baptized*, but as consecrated to God, he *Prayed*, *Luk. 3. 21.* as confirmed to the Combat, *he was led immediately into the Wilderneck to be tempted.* *Mark 1. 12.* And as one now compleatly fitted to transact the business of mans salvation, *he Preached the Kingdom of God*, *Mat. 4.* By all which the mediator doth plainly dictate, that Acts of holiness must move in order, beginning at Baptism : and that

Baptism

Baptism doth fit men to prayer, for *temptation*, and all publique acts of Religion; and if any will in confidence of acceptance follow the mediator, they must have their *body* first *washed with pure water*, and be by Baptism thereunto prepared.

Reas. 3. *Circumcision was the qualification of confident approach to God under the old Covenant*: And therefore Baptism having succeeded into the place, standing in the stead, and serving to the end for which Circumcision served, must be so under the new Covenant. The administration of the Covenant may be altered, but the Covenant it self abides substantially, the same to the Church of God both in the Old and New Testament. Sacraments are permanent and inseparable adjuncts to the Covenant as grounds of Faith: and however the different administration may cause a change in the Rite and outward Ceremony, in the matter applyed, or form of application, yet is there no change in their use and signification: but what was of old signified by the Seals of the Covenant, the same is now signified by such as have succeeded into their place; thus the *Lords Supper* supplyeth the *room of the Passover*; and *Baptism* the room of *Circumcision*; so that whatever *Circumcision* did confer on its Subjects, the same priviledges are by *Baptism* conferred on its subjects. And *Circumcision* was to the Jews the *Door of admission* into the Church, the *Ceremony of Consecration* to such as approach to the Lord; and the *Character of distinction* on the people of the living God, and so the qualification that was unto them the ground of confidence in approach to God; hence

*Circumci-*

*Circumcision* and *uncircumcision* are the distinguishing terms between the Jews (the onely people related unto God) and the Gentiles (that were afar off, without God, and without hope in the world, *Rom.* 2. 26. *Ephes.* 2. 11, 12.) and the approach of the *uncircumcised* unto the Sanctuary of God, is declared to be a polluting, and prophaning of Gods Sanctuary, *Ezek.* 44. 7, 9. therefore such are forbidden the least approach to God; they may not enter the Sanctuary nor observe the Lords Passeover, *Exod.* 12. 48. Nay, the *uncircumcised* must be cut off from the Lords people, *Gen.* 17. 14. And if a stranger will come nigh to God and have a place in his Sanctuary, he must first lay hold on the Covenant of God and be *Circumcised*; so that by *Circumcision* Jews were acknowledged, and Gentiles proselyted members of the Church, entituled to the Covenant, and entrusted with the liberty of access to God in his Sanctuary.

That *Baptism* is the Ordinance under the new Testament answering unto *Circumcision* in the Old, can any that observe the order of the Gospel, the cessation of *Circumcision*, the regular succession of *Baptism* into its place, beleiving some *initiating Seal essential to Gospel administration*, and see none established if *Baptism* be excluded; and find *Baptism* in all things fully significant of what was signified by *Circumcision*, deny that baptism is succeeded into the room, serves to the end that *Circumcision* did; and so confers the same priviledge of confidence, and is Essentially necessary to such as approach to God in acts of worship? Unto such I would in short say, Did *Circumcision* incorporate into the Church? are we not all

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*Baptized into one Body* ? 1 Cor. 12, 13. did *Circumcision* put the name of God on any ? do not as many as are *Baptised* put on Jesus Christ ? Gal. 3. 27. Was *Circumcision* a sign of Regeneration, called the Circumcision of the heart ? Are not the Baptized *buried with Christ in Baptism* ? Doth not the Apostle in this very respect note the agreement of these two distinct, but not different Seals ? Col. 2. 11, 12. Did not *Circumcision* Seal the Covenant of Grace, *I will be your God* ? is it not therefore called the Seal of the righteousness by Faith ? Rom. 4. 11. Is not the propriety to the promise of Grace, Remission and Salvation the very ground entitling and encouraging to *Baptism* as the Seal thereof ? Act. 2. 38, 39. And is not this agreement sufficient to demonstrate, that *Baptism* is now what *Circumcision* was of old to the Church ? What if in some things these two Seals do differ, is the difference so essential as to deny the succession of the one to the other ? It is true, the one was by *blood*, the other by *water* ; the one is to *male* and *femal*, both sexes, the other to *males* onely ; the one limited to the *eighth day*, the other left at liberty : but do these or the like hinder either the one or other from being Ordinances of *Incorporation* to the Church, *Consecration* to God, or *Confirmation* to our confidence in drawing nigh to God ? Will not the differences be found as many and great between the Passover, and the Lords Supper, yet the succession of the one to the other will not be denied ? Circumstantial differences do shew they are not the same in *substance*, and *matter*, but they must be essential disagreements that shall deny a succession unto the same *use* and *end*. And if *Baptism* be  
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not the ordinance that supplyeth the room of *Circumcision*, what doth? How is it called? when and where was it instituted? and who were ever consecrated by it, so as to have the boldness of access to God? Or is the Church defective under the New Testament as to an initiating Seal? so that the holy things of God lye common, no visible badge of holiness is now to describe them that may with freedom use them.

Most rude and ridiculous is that objected bar to this succession that some Antipedobaptists have urged and talked of among you, *viz. Circumcision was a National priviledge, and onely sealed the promise of Canaan to the children of Israel.* If so, how then came it to be used before *Israel* was a Nation? and how came it to be used after the land was possessed and the promise accomplished? Why doth *Moses* mention the Covenant of grace, *I will be your God*, as the ground and reason of Circumcision? To what doth the Circumcision of heart so frequently mentioned in Scripture allude? it is often joyned with the Circumcision of flesh: What was the benefit of Circumcision to the proselited Gentiles? We never read that by the vertue of it they demanded, or the Jews divided to them any portion of the Land of *Canaan*: And it will be an hard matter to make me beleve it did to them Seal a Blank, for that I find it in Scripturre called, *A layinghold on the Covenant of God*; and the *Uncircumcision* are declared strangers to the covenant, and without God, and without hope in the world. Why doth the Apostle define *Circumcision* to the Seal of the righteousness of Faith? I find this phrase to denominate the Covenant of Grace and



its Spiritual priviledges ; but that it ever denominated *Canaan* , or any National priviledges , I am yet to be informed : And the limitation of it unto the personal faith of *Abraham* is so inconsistent to the scope of the Text , absurd in it self ; and smells so much of Popish *Ballarwine* , that I cannot but avoid (I had almost said abhor) it : But lastly , I would Query whether the adversaries of *Circumcision* sealing the Covenant of Grace , did ever yet observe *adjuncts separable from a Covenant to bear the name of a Covenant* ? or did ever yet discern that the Land of *Canaan* was an *appendant* on the Covenant , but not of the *essence* of the Covenant , which if they well study , I doubt not but they will correct their ignorance , and the errors thence arising ; and so with us conclude , That *Circumcision* sealed Spiritual priviledges to the Jews , as *Baptism* doth to Christians ; and *Baptism* succeeding to its use and ends , must have the same subjects , and is now the special ground of confident approach to God.

*Reas. 4. The nature and order of Baptism doth dispose unto a confident approach to God* : Baptism is a *Seal* and the *first Seal* to the Covenant of Grace and Salvation , and so is a ground of Faith , and an encouragement in access to God. But in the nature of *Baptism* three things do dispose unto confidence in approach to the Lord :

It is an Ordinance,

1. *Of Conjunction to the Church.*
2. *Consecration to God.*
3. *Confederation with God.*

And every one of these are Reasons of boldness in access and assurance of acceptance.

I. Bap.

I. Baptism is an Ordinance of *conjunction to the Church*. The Church is Christs body, and every individual Christian is a member thereof, united by *Baptism* as by Nerves and Sinews: none but the Church may come nigh unto God, in *Zion* every one must appear before God: Christ is onely conversant with his Spouse; if the Gentiles will draw nigh to the God of *Jacob*, they must joyn themselves to *Israel* the people of the Lord: and all beleivers that will come nigh to God, must be added to the Church; all the promises of God are made to the Church; and all the administrations of the Covenant are in and to the Church; *Ex Ecclesia nulla Salus*, out of the Church no Salvation. They that will come nigh to God as his Children, must be the Daughters of *Sion*; of the household of Faith; and Common-wealth of *Israel*. To be cast out of the Church, is to be debarred of all Priviledges of grace, and delivered over to Satan; for that relation to the Church is the onely reason of every individual believers claim of promises and priviledges, and ground of confidence in all worship unto God; and this relation is conferred by Baptism, 1 Cor. 12, 13 *We are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, bond or free. Baptism is the onely badge of distinction to the Lords people: the very door of admission into the household of Faith; the very method of matriculation to Christ, his Disciples; and manner of adding to the Church* such as shall be saved, Act. 2. 41. In a word, *baptism is the band of union to all Gods servants*, binding them to a constant adherence to his Name, and joynt attendance on his  
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Worship; and is the *bar of division* from all others that are yet strangers to the Covenant; so as that until baptised they may not communicate of the holy things of God with the Church, nor come nigh with them to the Lord. In the primitive times of the Church the *Catechumenists*, who were preparing for *Baptism*, not having been yet Baptized, were sent from Church Communion and holy priviledg s with the profane and penitentiaries by the cry of *Sacra Sacris*, *holy things for holy men*: but when by Baptism they were incorporated into the Church then they continued in *prayer, breaking of bread, and every act of Worship to God with confidence*: so that till the Church appear our *Mother* we see no warrant to call *God Father*; his Children are no Vagrants in the high way and hedges, and when begotten by uncorruptible seed of the word, we were by Baptism placed in the lap, and laid to the breasts of the Church, then as her children we claim all the priviledges of the Covenant and come to the Throne of Grace with confidence; nor may any without a forfeiture of *Baptisme* be judicially exacted by the Church, deny our relation and liberty of access to God; I never yet could conceive any warrantable reason, to deny the liberty of access to the Lords Table, to such baptised souls, whose horrid prophaneness, and obstinate spirits did not make them obnoxious to the censures of the Church, in order to their excommunications and dismembring from the body; and certainly *Circumcision* did not more firmly incorporate unto the Church under the Law, and confer a liberty of approach unto the Sanctuary, then *Baptism* doth under the Gospel.

2. Baptism is an Ordinance of Consecration unto God, God is a God of Holiness and will be sanctified in such as come unto him ; none may appear before him in their prophaneness ; the Mals of Mankind is so prophaned with sin that men in common may not appear before God ; such as shall adore him must be adorned for him ; and if they will hold communion with him, they must be consecrated to him ; God never comes nigh to *Israel*, but he first calls to have the people *sanctified* ; nor comes the *Messiah* before his Messenger had prepared his way ; *Israel* the onely Nation that holds communion with, and comes to God are called an *holy Nation* ; because consecrated by Circumcision ; hence Circumcision is the term and title of a *sanctified people* ; but uncircumcision the Title and term that denominates the *prophanations*, that might not come nigh to God : It is Gods command that such as were not first sanctified by *Circumcision* must not touch the Passeeover, and it is given in charge to the keepers of the Sanctuary that the *uncircumcised* enter not into it to pollute it ; unhallowed things much less unhallowed persons, might not come nigh to God under the Law : the holiness of God is the same under the Gospel, and therefore such as will come nigh unto him must be consecrated, for he will have acceptable Sacrifice to be offered by a *chosen Generation*, a *Royal Priesthood*, an *holy Nation* ; 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9. Men must be brought out of the high-ways and hedges, and in his house be cloathed with a Wedding garment, that with any confidence will expect a welcom to his Wedding Supper, Mat. 22. And the onely Ordinance of Consecrati

*secration to God is Baptism: This is the badge of distinction and bar of division between the holy and prophane; if the Lord Jesus will present his Church to God, he Sanctifieth it by the washing of Water through the Word. Ephes. 5. 26. And if ever we will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, we must be born of the water and spirit: by baptism we are purified from the Corruptions that are in the world through lust, and solemnly dedicated unto the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost; hereby we are separated from the World, and added to the Church; and the baptised continue together in the Apostles Doctrine in prayer, and breaking of bread, and all acts of worship, so that being thus consecrated, called out of the mass of mankind, and constituted a peculiar and holy people to the Lord, Let us draw nigh in full assurance, having our bodies washed with pure water.*

3. Baptism is an Ordinance of Confederation with God; two cannot walk together except they be agreed; God is a consuming fire to man if he condescend not to a Covenant, as a skreen to prevent its scorching heat; *I will be your God and ye shall be my people*, is the onely argument of encouragement to Abraham to walk with God, and assurance of Believers acceptance with God; guilty man cannot come nigh offended God without some assurance that wrath is appeased and God reconciled: none since Adams fall can come nigh to God as a Creator; and Redemption must be transmitted by a Covenant; and the Administrations of the Covenant must be the onely pledge of assurance, and encouragement



ment unto access to God ; the Covenant of God with *Levi* is the onely liberty of the Priests entrance in the *Sanctum Sanctorum* ; the Covenant of *Mediatorship* is the confidence of Jesus Christ , his intercession , and the Covenant of *Circumcision* the *Israelies* title to the Passeeover and freedom of the Sanctuary ; and the Covenant of *Baptism* Christians right to the Lords Table, and freedom of drawing nigh to God.

The *Baptized* do confederate with God, you have heard before that they must be *federati*, in Covenant, that are subjects of Baptism, *the promise is to you*, is the ground and reason why any is baptized. Baptism is the mutual act of sealing the Covenant between God and the soul ; by this outward sign and pledge God assureth us *he will be our God*, pardon our sin, subdue our corruptions by the blood of Christ ; and we answerably stipulate with God, that *we will accept him to be our God in Christ* ; we will be called by his name, and become his servants, so that Baptism is an argument pleadable in prayer for the remission of sin, and sanctification ; and an engagement unto duty, against all impiety, to be urged under all temptation ; as it is a Sacrament it is a reciprocal bond between God and the soul : when *Paul* would check the *Corinthians* Schism, he doth it by this query, *were ye Baptised into the name of Paul* ? importing you are to call your selves by his name with whom you confederated in Baptism : so that the Baptised being *Gods federates* ; the Covenant being in their flesh, they must needs be qualified with confidence to come nigh to God, having such a ground of faith whereupon to claim the



promises as is the Seals of the Covenant ; the most encouraging argument that ever Gods people urged in access to God is, *Lord remember thy Covenant ; we are thy people.*

We see then, that if we will be guided in our drawing nigh to God , by the way of Christ , his *appearance to his Church*, or approach to his Father as a Mediator, or if we observe the *succession of Baptism to Circumcision* ; or the nature of Baptism as an Ordinance of *confederation with God ; consecration to God ; conjunction to the Church of God* ; we must needs be convinced that Baptism or the body washed with pure water is an especial qualification that fits us for access to God. And now we proceed to the Application of the Doctrine.

*The first use* then that we should make of this point is of *Information* , and that teacheth us this Lesson, *Baptism is an Ordinance of exceeding dignity and absolute necessity* to be pursued, and highly prized by the people of God that will draw nigh unto him : for it is the especial qualification that fits us with confidence to draw nigh unto him ; as it is an Ordinance of God , it is the Object of reverence, and esteem , and indispensably necessary by reason of *Divine command* ; not to be slighted by such as profess subjection to him : but of much more value when considered as the Ordinance of *incorporation into Christs body* , matriculation into the Household of faith , and consecration unto an holy God , and so it doth not onely call for affection, esteem, honour and reverence ; but also it presents it self unto our reason, and imposeth it self on our conscience , as  
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useful and indispensably necessary, whilst it appears not onely as *an act of worship*, but *Organ of grace*, and instrument of much good unto the soul, the which though it doth not confer, *opere operato*, by meer application, as by any Physical power in it self, yet it is a moral instrument offering matter to the rational argumentations and discourses of a beleiving soul, either to the encouragement of his faith, or enforcement of duty, and is by divine institution Gods method and instrument whereby he hath graciously confirmed these priviledges, and so it is necessary not onely *ratione precepti*, a *commanded duty*: but also *medii*, as a *moral means* to be managed by meditation and *Divine method* prescribed by the Lord, as that whereby we may claim his promise and conclude a relation to, and fitness for communion with him, and without which we cannot ordinarily expect his blessing, and be accounted his people; and what he doth in extraordinary cases, where he providentially supersedeth an Ordinance, as by *untimely death*, and the like, doth no way abate the *dignity*, or abstract from the *necessity of washing the body with pure water*, by the Sacrament of Baptism; the conviction of this truth will call for a constant and reverent attendance on Baptism, and conscientious use of it in all convenient opportunitie that God shall give us; and check the contempt, and prophane neglect thereof that is not a little abounded (to our shame and with grief of heart be it spoken) in the midst of us: were men but rightly affected with the nature of Baptism, they would see in it *beauty*, and of it a great *necessity*. Was not washing of the flesh

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necessary, and the holy Garment glorious in *Israel* because they fitted for approach to God, and entrance into the holy place? if men were but really convinced that *the body washed with pure water* was a ground of assurance, because a qualification of access to God; that Baptism is the onely band of union and door of admission into the Church, the formal consecration to the service of the living God, what an esteem of baptism must needs possess their hearts, and make them not content without, but careful to pursue it; as seeing into Gods presence there is no approach to such as are not sanctified by the *washing of water through the Word*? but a pressing unto Gods Ordinances, not thus prepared, must be a presumption, no less then damnable; nay how would the sense of Baptism affect the heart with joy, whilst thereby we are made *Members of Gods Church* (an higher priviledge then the Coronation of a King) and made fit for the worship of an holy God; the ground of all alacrity and boldness in the use of his Ordinances? How must such a soul say, *what a happy condition am I now in, who through Grace have my body washed with pure water, and joyned to the household of faith, and sanctified for the service of that consuming fire and Holy God, whom to approach unto, is the greatest happiness man can enjoy? whilst others are a far off, debarred the Holy things of grace, and dare not intermeddle with the holy things of God, nor draw nigh unto his holy place; I come with freedom into his Sanctuary, and claim the liberty and priviledges thereof by vertue of Baptism, that covenant of God which is upon my flesh, in this therefore I will rejoyce before the Lord.* Nay, the sense of Baptism as a qualification

lification for access to God, would set our hearts into a reverent use, and dreadful attendance on the administration of it to others; whilst the *Element* is weak and simple, its use and end must make it glorious and powerful; whilst common washing is contemptible, a bathing the flesh at the door of the Tabernacle in order to an entrance into the holy place, and appearance before God is dreadful; though Wax and Parchment are poor and vile, base and common commodities, most shops afford Commodities much higher prized, yet these conjoynd by the hand of Majesty to make a Patent, Deed, or *Magna Charta* to secure some grant, priviledge, or great revenue, is of much more worth and value, and received with more reverence and esteem; if we look on water, we see it is an *Element* as low, as common, as mean in our esteem, as ordinary in mens use; and this is ready to raise in our hearts contemptible thoughts, and make us say, what a *beggerly Element* and *base Administration* is this? What profit can be in the Application of a few drops of water? But when we shall consider that water is applied by vertue of Gods command, as a most sacred Ordinance, to signifie the blood of Christ, whereby we are cleansed from all sin; to seal unto us the Covenant of Grace and all its priviledges of Salvation; to set us in union with the Church, to the enjoyment of all Gospel Ordinances; and Sanctifie us as a peculiar people, that may and must draw nigh to God in assurance of faith; what lustre doth there appear in the Ordinance? what reverence doth then raise our spirits? what high and honourable regard do we then see we owe  
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unto this common and contemptible act of Baptism? oh what prayers for efficacy? what praises for enjoyment? what pleasure in administration? must the consecrating, qualifying and soul-encouraging assuring nature of Baptism effect in all such as are seriously affected with Gods holiness and the order of approach to him? unto all such Baptism is no carnal beggerly and unprofitable Element, but a glorious, Spiritual, Evangelical Administration of exceeding dignity; no Church complement and matter of indifferency that may or may not be used without any damage, but a compleat duty by reason of Divine command and its own due nature, disposing man into such a devout relation to God, and so of indispensable necessity.

*Use 2.* Is of Reproof, justly to blame that *disesteem and disregard of Baptism that is to be found among us*; our age of liberty hath set us so loose to Gospel Ordinances, that many can be not onely content without them, but also readily run into the contempt of them; how few in the midst of us understand the nature and seek the use of Baptism as a *ground of faith*, and Ordinance of *Consecration*, and so of *confident access to God*? mens principles and practice doth proclaim their palpable ignorance of such priviledges possessed by the *body washed with pure water*: How many (to our shame, and with grief be it spoken) do use Baptism as a meer *Church complement, and convenient Ceremony*? to the content of their Wives, Kinsfolk, Friends or Neighbours, bring their Children to be Baptised, without any awe of an Ordinance of God upon their Spirit; or apprehension

prehesion of advantage to be by Baptism conferred; or design and intention of solemn dedication of their children to God, and his service; and so to have Gods name and covenant stamped upon their flesh? and them fitted for access to God in the Assemblies of his people? hence it is that they are at cost and care for the civilities that attend the Baptism of their children, but as for the *Solemn praises of God*, for the *blessing of the Covenant*, *prayers for a blessing* on an Ordinance, and careful *instruction* of their Baptized children in the consecrating nature of Baptism, the *boldness* it creates, and the *duty of access to God* it imposeth, these come not into his thoughts, cost him no care or pains, his friends gone, and work done, he thinks himself well rid of a piece of trouble, and pursues that days enjoyments to no more advantage: nay how many sit so luke-warm in minds and affections to *Baptism*, that they think it to be a meer Ceremony, and matter of indifferency, *if their body be washed* they are content, but they know no good it hath done them; and if it *be not washed* they are as well pleased, they see no loss they undergo by the want of it? they can accompany with the baptized or unbaptized in the Assemblies of Gods people, and Administrations of grace; they matter not an outward ceremony, but look after the inward and hidden man of the heart; *true and real Grace without any outward Ordinance*, shall be the ground of their communion; they say, *Circumcision or Uncircumcision avails not to them*; must it not be concluded that these men yet need to be informed in the first rudiments of the *Doctrine of God*, e'en the  
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the *Doctrine of Baptism* ? and to be convinced that the body washed with pure water, is the qualification prescribed by a glorious God, to consecrate such as with confidence approach before him ? and so the contempt of it must needs be prophane and dangerous ; Nay, too many in the midst of us, open their black mouths, and give their blasphemous tongues the liberty of *decrying and vilifying* this Holy Ordinance, enveighing against it as a carnal, base, beggerly Element, and *Excrementious Ordinance*, an Antichristian Idol, and piece of abomination ; so horribly prophane and impudent do impostors grow by liberty, that they will outface God, and speak blasphemously of Divine Institution, and the appointed order of access to God in the assemblies of his people. Nay, what shall we say to the *rude recession* of people from the application of baptism to others ? or their *irreverent attendance on it*, as if it concerned not them, or were no part of *Gods Worship* ? and of those eminent pretenders unto Saint-ship, who *disown the relation of men Baptized to God*, and themselves (as the people of God) *standing at a distance* from the consecrated to the Lords service, as if *profane* and altogether *strangers to the Covenant* ? and many other profane carriages that are insuitable to so holy an Ordinance ; But *Generalia non pungunt* ; not to confine myself to Generals, which will hardly reach the heart and consciences. Give me leave to take notice of those principles and practises that are inconsistent with this holy use and nature of *Baptism*, and do indeed profanely militate against this Doctrine that teacheth you, *That Baptism, or the body washed with*  

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pure water, is the especial qualification of confidence in approach to God in the Assemblies of his people: and I shall Rank them into this order, and make them know by these names:

They are such who,

1. *Disstate to the unbaptised a liberty of access to God.*

2. *Disown and decline their Baptism in their approaches to God.*

3. *Disregard Baptism administred to others.*

4. *Disesteem the priviledges conferred by Baptism.*

5. *Declare not to theirs baptised, the dignity and duty of Baptism.*

6. *Deny the Baptised the liberty of access to God in the assemblies of his people, and use of his Ordinances.*

Unto each of these this Doctrine doth speak reproof and blame, as we shall note in the particular consideration of them. And

*First*, If the washing of the body with pure water, or baptism, be the especial qualification of confident approach to God in the assemblies of his people, then generally are they to blame, who do *Disstate to the unbaptised a liberty of access to God*. Many in this Remisse age of ours, can make baptism a matter of no moment in their Communion; they can hold Communion with baptised or unbaptised, and cry out, *Circumcision or uncircumcision is to them nothing*; as if this Ordinance of baptism were rendred indifferent as the nullified Ordinance of *circumcision*. And they themselves complain of rigor

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and severity in such as impose *Baptism as the ground of communion in the Church*, and decline the administration of holy things to the *unbaptized*; these call for inward grace, *the answer of a good conscience*, *Real love* to Jesus Christ, and then they care not whether they ever pass under the outward Ordinance or be *baptized*: And herein the luke-warmness of private men is not so much to be blamed, for that the leaders of the people cause them to erre; some that stand in the midst of you as guides, and profess themselves Ministers of Jesus Christ, and teachers of the truth, have not been affraid (if I may not say ashamed) positively to affirm, and (in this Pulpit) plainly to teach as the very mind of

God, *That Baptism is not the ground of Church Communion, but real grace, the answer of a good Conscience, by the Resurrection of Christ from the dead*: and therefore did offer and affirm, *That although a man were altogether ignorant of the Doctrine of Baptism, and had never passed under that outward Ordinance, yet he could own him as a member of the Church, hold communion with him, and admit him to all the Ordinances of Jesus Christ*; and much to this purpose, which stands in a direct contradiction to this truth, and declared use of Baptism. For if it be the qualification of access to God, the door of admission into the Assemblies of Gods people, and way of consecration unto Communion in the holy things of God: must it not needs be *profaneness* to administer the holy things of God to such as are not thus qualified? and *presumption* to invite such unto the participation of them? But a little to expostulate with the asserters of this *Baptism-subverting*

*verting notion* : Will God be worshipped by outward ordinances ? and must these Ordinances be enjoyed in order , some preparing for participation to others ? Is Baptism the first Ordinance of the Gospel ? Initiating Seal of the Covenant ? Door of admission into the Church ? and Method of Matriculation into the household of Faith ; and way of consecration unto Communion with God and his people ? Is it not reckoned among the first principles of the word of God , to be learned by all Disciples entred into Christs school ? and if so , must it not be horrid profaneness to decry the knowledge of Baptism and its Doctrine ? To expose communion with God and his people to common hands never sanctified , and by *body washing* separated from the heap of mankind ; on whom *Baptism* never stamped holiness ? and gross impiety to fling open the door of Gods House , that Dogs and Swine may enter at pleasure , there being no *baptismal badge* of distinction between them and the children of God ? Is it not great prodigality to offer the priviledges of the Covenant to every hand , not having any sealed interest whereon to claim ? Is it not grievous presumption to decline the directed order of the Gospel , and dispence the holy things of God in a way and method contrary to that whereby Christ and his Apostles either enjoyned or administred them ? Must not this needs be Superstition , Will-worship , a laying wast Divine directions , and running from the Rule of Scripture , and due method of holy things ? Must not God in his jealousy needs arise and say to such Ministers as to the Keepers of the Sanctuary , Ezek. 44. 7. *You have enough of all abomonations , seeing ye have*

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*brought into my house the unbaptised in flesh and in spirit.* To what end do these men baptise any, or urge any to be baptized; In this assertion baptism is proclaimed a matter of indifferency, nay, a meer nullity, an action of no advantage, administred to no end: for if it confer not outward priviledges, it will never convey inward grace. And thus the institutions of the Lord Jesus stands charged with *folly* and *vanity*,, and the Ordinances of the Gospel are made complements, and bootless Ceremonies; but rather the spirit of seduction is evidenced to be prophane, notoriously wicked, willingly withstanding Divine Order, and in the name of God exposing the holy God to irreverent, rude approaches, and his Seals and sanctifying Ordinance to scorn and contempt.

Nor is this guilt thus charged in the least extenuated by the qualification required and propounded as the ground of Communion; viz. *Real Grace, the answer of a good conscience, by the Resurrection of Christ from the dead*; for I never yet found this propounded in Scripture as the ground of Church *Communion*; nor is it discernable by every eye of every common beleiver, who are to see such sanctified unto God, to whom they do joyn themselves; Nay, the very Stewards of the mysteries of God have not that Spirit of infallible discerning the truth of grace: Gross *Hypocrites* have been by the very Apostles of Jesus Christ baptized and admitted into the Church: and so will be by all that administer holy things, for *Hypocrites* void of true Grace, must be found in the Church, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall come to Judgment. And if it could be known, yet by  
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what authority is *inward Grace* divided from the *outward Ordinance*, and opposed thereunto? Those things which God hath joyned together, shall any man dare to divide asunder? and can true grace consist with ignorance of the Doctrine of Baptism, and neglect and contempt of the least Ordinance of Jesus Christ, and inversion of the order of the Gospel? But is not this most graceless Chymistry so to spiritualize Gospel dispensation as to deifie every Minister that hath the charge of the Sanctuary? Nay, every beleiver that must hold communion in the Ordinances of the Gospel, by making them *searchers of the heart*, and infallible discerners of Real grace, the ground of Church communion, and to juttle out the washing of the body which God hath made the ground of confidence in access to him in the assemblies of his people.

*Secondly*, The second sort to be reproved as contradictory to this consecrating, faith-encouraging Ordinance of *washing the body with pure water*, are such as *Disown and decline Baptism, in their drawing nigh to God, in the assemblies of his people*: Like Priest, like people; if men that call themselves Ministers and Teachers shall with black mouths *blaspheme Baptism*, it cannot but meet with people that shall profane, contemn, and cast off that holy Ordinance. If Teachers shall dare in the Name of the Lord to declare, *That water-baptism is not the ground of communion with the Church visible*; no marvel if men do slight Baptism in seeking such communion; nay, it were a marvel if some should not sinfully reject and renounce it; for he is a mean man  
that



that draweth not some clients after him : Are there not many in the midst of us that make their way to God by *renouncing their Baptism* , when once their fancy doth but dictate to them a vanity in that outward Ordinance , and their tongues are filled with villifying invectives , calling it *beggarly Element* , *carnal ordinance* , *outward and groundless ceremony* , *badge of Antichrist* , *Superstitious administration* ; their hearts are as full of joy as they can hold , now they are full of courage , can come with freedom and full assurance to God , being , as they pretend *baptised with the Spirit and Fire* ; now they boldly joyn themselves to that assembly they call the *Church of God* , and despising all outward Ordinances, their formal admission must be by a full *renunciation of their baptism* and all carnal acts of worship (as they phrase it) that they may serve God in Spirit.

This generation of men must needs appear most grossly *ignorant* or greatly *deluded* as to the method of approach to God , and manner of worship to be done unto him. Unto them I would demand, If they be guided by Scripture directions (not Enthusiasmes, and pretend Inspirations) whether Scripture doth not declare, That *divided man must make no approach to God* ? the Spirit of all flesh will be adored with outward Acts of worship which he himself hath appointed. Hath God commanded baptism to no *use or end* ? May bodies not *consecrated* come nigh to holy presence ? Must not the Lords immediate attendants be distinguished from the rest of the world by some *Livery* that is obvious and to be seen by every eye ? Can the Spirit and sacred Ordinances of God stand opposite one to the other, and not consist-

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ent each with other ? And must sincere grace share stakes with God, giving man the *body* and, God the Spirit ? The Devil may be content with the half of man, for he well knows by that mean he doth possess the whole, for God will have all or none : They that will draw nigh to his Sanctuary must *love him with all their might, heart, soul, and strength* : they that will wait on him, must worship him in *Body and spirit* ; They that walk as the redeemed of Christ, must *glorifie him with soul and body, which is their reasonable Sacrifice*, Rom. 12. 1. *For both were bought with a price*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. God will part with no part of his purchase, and hath therefore prescribed outward acts of adoration to be bodily performed in the sincerity of Spirit, and appointed the *washing of the body with pure water* to consecrate and stamp holiness on the outward man, as well as the *sprinkling of the heart* for the inward. *The exercise of the body* in the outward Acts of worship without the Spirit, is *plain Hypocrisie* ; and the *exercise of the spirit* without the bodies subjection to outward Ordinances, is *positive profaneness* ; such is the Souls influence on the Body, that if awfully apprehend Majesty it will make the bodily members to express it : In vain is hearts subjection pretended where the yoke of outward Ordinances is broken from the neck : what likelihood of loyalty from such as scorn the livery ? sad is that Sanctity that sets at enmity Gods Spirit and sacred Ordinances : Cursed is that cry of holiness that cryeth down Divine Order and Ordinances : Rebellious is that Assembly whose Incorporation is a renunciation of the matter and Method of Gods Worship : Dreadful must needs be  
God,

Gods approach to that people that draw nigh unto him not duly consecrated to that end by baptism, and touch the holy things of God in his Assembly, not having the *body washed with pure water*. I have lost my little skill in Scripture Calculation, if such perish not in the gain-saying of *Korah*, and occasion not a *Perz vzzah* in Israel.

Whilst some disown Baptism as an outward Ordinance, by the Spirit of Familism disowning all outward administrations; There are others that will joyn with us in condemning them, and consent that God must be worshipped by bodily *acts of Religion*, yet they find no way of access to God, but by receding from the Baptism they had received, and disowning the consecrating; Faith-encouraging use of the *washing of their bodies in pure water*, to which they have been subject: These are our *Antipedobaptists* become actual *Anabaptists*, who (quarrelling at Infants interest unto Baptism, and the Administrators thereof) do disown all relation they have had to the Church, and the priviledges they enjoyed by their Baptism; and disavowing the holiness thereby conferred, they declare themselves to have been *cozened* when *Christned*: and although they have sometime deemed themselves the people of God, sanctified by the *washing of water*, in Covenant with God, and sweet Communion with his heople; Now they declare themselves to be *aliens and strangers to the Commonwealth of Israel, without hope, without God, and without Christ in the world*; and therefore renouncing this Baptism they seek another way of access to God; and by an *imagined Baptism* of their own creation, they encourage their Spirits, and  
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stamp holiness upon themselves, and pretend to joyn themselves to the assemblies of the Lords people, declaring all others to be *Dogs*, and onely themselves the *children of the Kingdom*; all others to be in the *high ways and Hedges*, and themselves the onely Church of *Christ* to whom men must be joyned on pain of eternal Damnation: When I consider these men, I cannot but consider the impetuous violence of an Erroneous judgement in hurrying to irregular practise, and the giddy preposterous zeal that is produced by Reason-darkning fancy: this carriage doth plainly bespeak these men to be greatly *irrational*, and *grossely ignorant*.

First, *They appeared to be greatly Irrational*, and that because they nullifie Gods Ordinances by *mistaken or miscarried circumstances*, which no way destroy their essence: Their ground is, *Infants ought not to be Baptized*; and they were Baptized in their Infancy; their ignorant parents in their ignorance did *superstitiously* cause them to be *sprinkled* by some unworthy *Sir John* or other, and hereby they were *cozened*; but now they thank God they see the *superstition* of *Baby-sprinkling*, and therefore will have their bodies *washed*, and joyn themselves to the *Baptised Saints*. Unto this Plea of theirs, I wish they had reason enough to see the irrationality of it: for presuppose (which is not true) that *Infants have no right to Baptism*; it will not thence follow that *Infant-baptism* is *superstitious*, *void* and *null*: For *Baptism* is Gods Ordinance, *Christs* own Institution; *Age* or *infancy* are but *circumstances* directing the Subject to whom it is applyed, and is not essential to the Ordinance:

if Baptism be a worship according to the mind of Christ, then *Infant Baptism* is out of all danger or possibility of will-worship; in case *infans* were not (as undoubtedly they are) within the Verge of the Covenant, yet their baptism can be no Will-worship, for we set not up the Ordinance we apply to them, but make application of the Ordinance, *Christ instituted*; so that our utmost guilt is *misapplication* of worship instituted by God; not *devising any worship of our own heads*; these men do irrationally charge the *corruption* of an ordinance, and *misapplication* of an Institution with *Superstition*; and this corruption in a circumstance they imagine to nullifie the Ordinance, and improve to a *nonentity* of their baptism; most irrationally making the Age *essential to the Ordinance*, which God never did so appoint in either Old or New Testament-times, either in the initiating Seal of Circumcision or baptism: God did indeed direct Circumcision to be applyed at the eighth day, but the *direction of the Age* is distinct from the *institution of the Ordinance*, and not of the essence thereof, otherwise none might be Circumcised after the eighth day to have their Circumcision valid and of force: under the New Testament we have neither *institution of the Age*, nor subsequent *direction for it*, save onely the *qualification of the Subject*; as being made Disciples, brought into a *propriety to the promise*, and the like, of what age soever, unless our Anabaptists will make Christs Baptism the *institution of the Ordinance and Age* to which it is to be applyed; and then I do believe their latter Baptism will be as void as the former, for I believe they are younger or elder, very few of the  
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just direct Age of the Lord Jesus when baptized; so that the Age can no way be made essential to the Ordinance: the *corruption circumstantial* will not bring upon it a *nonentity* and necessity of *rebaptization*: though they might have cause to bewail the sin of their parents in corruptly *misapplying Gods seal*, what necessity is there of plucking it off, and Cancelling the Covenant of God to them confirmed? I cannot beleive that if a Jew had been Circumcised before the eighth day, that he would have renounced the Circumcision because *misapplied* in point of time by his neglective parents: deviations from order may be profaneness to be rebuked, but cannot be *destructive to the Ordinance* that the privileges thereof should be lost, and it be reiterated: I do not beleive that these men will Disfranchise themselves of the privileges of a Free-man of London though they were incorporated before the age directed by the rules of the Chamber for admitting Free-men. Methinks their Reason should be a Chancery of more equity then to cut themselves off from the Congregation of Gods people, and cast off the liberty of access, because of their unseasonable and *too early Baptism*: if the Church on such a miscarryed circumstance should disfranchise them, ordeny their relation to the Household of Faith, she were deservedly censured for cruel severity, and her *summum jus* must needs be deemed *summa injuria*: the greatest wrong is to punish *failed Circumstances* with the highest severity due to the greatest crimes. Onely blind zeal and irrationall folly is censorious to themselves to disown their own interest on such a ground as will not warrant the Church to deprive



them of it : Self-execution under the greatest guilt, differs little from murder : but it must needs be sinfully violent, when extended in measure beyond the nature of the fault : Self-excommunication on so slight a ground cannot but be the sting of an awakened conscience apprehensive of the privileges lost : the out cry of such a conscience must needs be this ; O wretched ! *my Parents misapplied the Seal, and therefore I have cast off the Covenant by my own will, and deprived my self of those blessed enjoyments the hand of justice never demanded from me : Oh cruelty ! self-cruelty ! How justly might God say Amen to thy self, censure and blind thee under thy loss for ever.*

But to extenuate this irrationality in the rejection of their Baptism received in infancy they (endeavouring to master by number of exceptions under the want of force) further plead, *Why, but we were baptized by some unworthy Minister, and in a superstitious manner, with the ceremonies of the Church, and sign of the cross :* and therefore we cannot make that baptism a ground of Faith in the approach to God : Hereby they do but act their irrationality the further ; for suppose ye were baptized by any unworthy Minister, yet he was a Minister : though the essence of the Ordinance may depend on the *Authority*, yet not on the *Dignity* of the *Administration*. The wickedness of an Ambassador maketh not his Embassie concluded to be void and vain ; the impression of a lawfully commissioned Judge though he be unjust, is valid and of force ; the Grant of a cruel King and profane Prince will be by these men admitted as the substantial binding Charter of the peoples

peoples Priviledges : we read often of the profaneness of the Priests of Israel, but never of a non-entity brought upon Gods Ordinances in their hand : If they be in *Moses Chair*, though we must not *do as they do*, we are bound to the *attention and obedience of what they say* : it is not impossible for a man to Preach to others, and himself be a cast-away : I never read that the Baptism of those baptized by the unworthy hand of *Judas* was ever pronounced *void or null*. A pure Ordinance is unhandsom in a profane hand, but yet its essence is not impaired, it is Gods Ordinance effectual to its end. So that if they were baptized by Ministers though unworthy (wherein I wish charity be not violated, for that many know not who they were they do censure as unworthy ; nay, some worthy men to themselves so known, they now call unworthy) it is a corruption consistent with the essence of the Ordinance, not any way destructive to its being. The same is to be said for the annexed Ceremonies that they were *profanely added*, but yet did not *nullifie the Ordinance*, but it stands in full force as a ground of confidence in access to God.

But secondly, As they appear greatly irrational in inferring more then their premises will allow, so they are *Grossly ignorant* ; nay I fear many wilfully shutting their eyes may be charged to be *grossly obstinate* : They renounce their baptism under the notion of *superstition*, not considering they run into the sin of *Sacriledge* ; charity must persuade us these men understand not the *method, and ministration of the Covenant of Grace*, otherwise they could never charge Infant-

Infant Baptism with *superstition*; (which is the very application of Gods Ordinance to its proper subjects) and so Sacrilegiously rob God, his Church, believing parents, and their children of those holy duties and Dignities that belong unto them. Have we not before noted, that they who are in Covenant with God ought to be Baptized? and is not this the principle wherein we all agree? And if these men know any thing of the method and ministration of the Covenant, must they not needs confess, That the *natural issue of one or both believing Parents are in Covenant*? as we have before proved: and so fit *subjects for Baptism*, that they may and must be partakers of the first *initiating Seal*, of which God hath made them capable in their *Passive age and estate*: Can any stand convinced that such infants are as soon as born the *Lords Heritage*, Psal. 127. 3. *The Lords servants*, Lev. 25. 42. *Children begotten to him*, Ezek. 16. 20. 21. *Holy ones*, Rom. 11. 16. 1 Cor. 7. 14. *Children of the Covenant*, Acts 4. 25. *To whom belongs the promise*, Act. 2. 28. *Interessed in the priviledges of the people of God*, Mar. 10. 14. and withhold the Keeper of the Sanctuary and Stewards of Gods household from setting of Gods mark in his flesh, or withstand their dedication unto God? Must not we give *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsars*, and God the things that are Gods? Will not God account it a *Robbery* that they which are *his* shall be withheld from him? Again, can any consider the issue of believing Parents to be the *Churches Children, begotten to the Lord*, Ezek. 16. 20. an *holy seed* scattered for her increase, and yet snatch them out of her armes, and cast them out of her bosome into the wide wilderness of the world? Shall not the

the Church lament and refuse to be comforted whilest she is *bereaved of her babes*, and as a Bear robbed of her whelps? Will not such *robbery* prove her *ruine*, and the drying up her seed hinder her increase, and make her *barren and fruitless*? Again, shall the children of such believing Parents be born members of *the household of faith*, and not be incorporated by Baptism? Shall *Loyalty* be their born duty, and not Gods *Livery* their dignity? Shall the *Covenant of Grace* be the Charter of their privilege and the *Seals* not be applyed to them as they are capable of receiving them? Shall they be *holy* in their kind, and the *badge of distinction* be denied them? If any thing would make a new born babe to speak, sure this *Sacredge* would do it: there is reason for the real demand that is fabled of one *Rumball*, Son to an English King, at *Brackely* in *Northamptonshire*, that as soon as he was born he requested to be baptized for that he was a Christian: Is it not a cruel sacredge to *shut out of the Ark of salvation*, such whose title to entrance cannot be denied? Yet further, is Baptism the only *visible evidence* God hath given to parents of the extent of the *Covenant* to their children; and shall any deprive them of this reason of *hope*, cause of *joy*, ground of *Faith in Prayer*, and spur to *duty* in dedication to God, and education of their children for God? So that these things considered, such as on this ground of being Baptized in infancy do renounce their baptism, do out of ignorance of Gods *Covenant* commit most horrid *Sacredge* by *robbing God of his Heritage, the Church of children, and the benefits of the administration of Baptisme to infants* (which by Gods grace I shall shew to be great) the children of be-  
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lieving parents of their *Seal of the Covenant* of which they are capable, and their parents of that ground of Faith the administration of the Covenant doth award them : And so they give us cause not only to charge them with *irrationality* in fancying Gods holy Ordinance to be *superstition* ; but in the language of of the Apostle to say, *Thou that abhorrest Idols dost commit Sacrilege*, Rom. 2. 22. So that not only groundlessly, but even contrary to Divine method and order, they disowning the regular washing of their body in pure water, do divest themselves of that Seal of sanctity and vesture of holiness by which they were fitted for a confident approach to God : and decline the Assemblies of Gods people, in which alone the Lord is to be adored, and joyn themselves to *false assemblies*, where they are consecrated to, and come before God *in a way that is not of his appointment, nor can expect his approvement* ; how high soever false hopes and joyes may carry their spirits ? For those to whom they joyn, are *divided from the Church of Christ*, and void of all commission to administer the holy things of God : if you look at their *constitution*, you shal find it is no other then *self-congregation*, with the cry of *all the Lords people are holy*, and invectives against Aaron and Moses *as they who take too much upon them* ; the which I could never yet find warranted in Scripture, but is remarkably condemned in the *company of Korah that were thus constituted* : Ministerial authority is no less essential to constitute a Church of Christ, then Magistral to constitute a Corporation or Company ; my little skill in Politicks could never see that *self-congregation could constitute any body, but that which is seditious or Schismatical* ? And as Ko-  
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*rah* seems to have been the Counsellor of their Constitution, so *Jeroboam* seems to be of their Consecration, for he that will, may make himself a Priest, even the lowest of the people are Ministers to the Lord, uncalled and unqualified they presume to administer holy things, which is a shadow and appearance of Divine worship, but indeed a real building of Altars, besides the Altar of the Lord; and gives just cause to the people of God (truly pious and pursuing the truth of his Ordinances) to pray as the Church in *Jeroboams* dayes. Tell me, O thou whom my Soul loveth where thou feedest thy flock, where thou makest them to rest at noon, for why should I turn aside by the flocks of thy companions? (so seem and pretend to be) Cant. i. 7. So that their exchange of the baptism they renounce, for that they now receive, is a profaning of themselves, who once were an holy people to the Lord, and by false wayes of sanctity to let themselves at a greater distance from God, and to shake, nay to rake up the Foundations of their Faith; and exchange their assurance rightly grounded on their baptism, for a fond presumption flowing from Sacrilegious notions and false worship, which must at the last fall into the hands of the living God, and be found as stubble before a consuming Fire, because unconsecrated in the presence of an holy God: for never to be sanctified, and after to be profaned is all one in its event and issue; they that contemn, and they that cast off Gods holy Ordinance shall fall into the same condemnation.

The third sort to be reprov'd as carrying Contradictorily to this qualification to confident approach to God, are such as disregard the Administration of



66 *The Vertue and Value of Baptism.*

*baptism unto others* : These acknowledge the use and benefit of having the body washed with pure water, but by the rudenesse of their behaviour do declare themselves *ignorant or insensible of its holy nature and consecrating use*. These are such as *drive the Sacrament*, in its administration *into corners* and *continue not in the Congregation*, in the administration of it ; they think it is convenient children be baptized, but the *solemnity thereof* is to them *strange and needless*; they will call some few friends together, and call in to baptise it any Minister that flubbers over the act as easily as they desire, & in a way of complement get the work done, never considering It is a *Church Ordinance*, and of due belongs to the *whole assemblie*, not particular families or persons ; nor with any reverence composing themselves to a *solemn and Religious act of dedication to God*, many in this case carry toward the Ordinance as a meer *Complement* ; to please wife, kinsfolk or neighbours they will have their Children Baptized, and the civilities thereunto belonging being past they think themselves well rid of a piece of trouble, and never devote themselves to any Religion in the application of this Ordinance : *Incorporation into the bosshould of Faith* ; *Dedication to an holy God* is not in their thoughts, their *praises* proclaim not any sense of a Covenant priviledge ; nor doth their *Prayers* pursue God for his blessing on his own Ordinance ; they break not through any difficulties to present their children to God in the Assemblies of his people ; they think not the *silent suffrages* of the Society of any moment in the incorporation of a Member ; or their *supplications* of any virtue to an Ordinance of sanctification ;

fication; but as unaffected with these things, they get the work done, the child Baptized, they neither care where, how, or by whom, for when its done they have done.

And others are in this respect no lesse blame worthy, who *turn their backs rudely and irreverently when Baptism is administred*; whilst the Word, Prayer, and other Ordinances are in hand, they sit composedly in the Congregation; but when Baptism comes in hand they posit out of the Church; as if this were *not worth their attendance, or tended not any way to their advantage*. Unto these I would say, *Is not Baptism an Ordinance of God and act of worship to his people*? Is it not an Ordinance of *incorporation into the body of the Church of God*, of which thou art a member? oughtest not thou to take them into society, and by thy presence to witness their relation? thou givest them little honour who hast not patience to attend their solemn admission into the Society of the Saints: Is not Baptism *the Seal of the Covenant, the Sanctifying Ordinance of access to God*? Administresth it not matter of meditation concerning *Mans Guilt, Gods Grace, the Covenant of Salvation between God and man*, whereby thou mayest be edified? Is not the Baptism of a Christian of high *concernment*? doth it not tye the baptized to *great and many engagements*? Are they not *obnoxious to many temptations*, to violate the Covenant? Is not Baptism the Ordinance of holiness? Gods blessing needful to make it *holy*, and prayers of the Church the way to obtain Gods blessing? that thou turnedst away and followest not the Ordinance with thy prayer? Can a conscience awed by the sanctity of any Ordinance and

affected with the holiness of God to be adored. dispense with the neglect and contempt of other Ordinances equally holy, nay, in order the first of, and that without which, other Ordinances must not be used?

The fourth sort of such whose practise doth militate with the consecrating nature of baptism, are such *who disesteem their own baptism owned and adhered unto* : many have had their bodies washed with pure water, and would not be without their *Baptism* for all the world ; but yet as for any great benefit they ever received by it, they know no reason they have to esteem it at so high a rate : They never read any thing of Divine favour in their Baptism, nor from it reaped either counsel or comfort ; the reflections of duty and dignity are to them strange and unusual, Baptism having once passed on their bodies comes no more into their minds. It is not to them any engagement to, or encouragement in duty or drawing nigh to God ; the which as it *exposeth the Ordinance to contempt not imaginable*, so it bespeaks such souls to be *unspeakably ignorant or insensible of the nature, use and end of the washing of the body with pure water* ; for can any soul that understands and believes Baptism to be a *pledge of divine affection*, live under it without observation of Gods peculiar love to them above others who want it ? Can any stand convinced, That the *Seal of God is in their flesh*, live and not lay claim to God by so visible a ground of claim ? Can any say that by Baptism they are *purged from the corruptions that are in the world through lust*, and live in sin ? Can any consider hereby they are *called out of the World, and consecrated to the*

*the worship of one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,* and neglect directed acts of Adoration, the holy service that is assigned by their Lord and King? much less should such Apostatize from the Profession of that name, and run into open Rebellion against him with whom they stand confederated, bound in Covenant? can any think Baptism to be the *bond of union* and *nerve of incorporation* with the Church of Christ, and not *Sympathize* with her under all the changes of her condition? much less can such make *Schisms* in, or *separation from her body*, and forsake the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is: Much is the advantage Baptism once received may administer to a soul all his days, *if by rational acts of faith it were improved*, either as a *moral instrument*, or outwards sign exhibited matter of meditation, or as a *Divine Ordinance* and Seal of the righteousness by Faith, established to assure man of the promises of Grace and Salvation: And yet (to our shame be it spoken) how little thereof is reaped by regardless us? Baptism is a memorial of our misery, and Gods mercy; a manifest expression of that natural uncleanness which sets us at a distance from God, and eminent act of sanctifying unto an access to God; and yet how many make no use of it, nor find matter of meditation by it? God hath appointed it an instrument of Regeneration and Salvation, how few find these effects produced by it? nay, improve it thereunto? It is that Seal that assures of interest in all the promises of grace; yet when do men propound it to themselves as a ground of faith, or plead it in prayer? How many live in such profaneness, that the Church may charge them

them to have forgotten that they were purged from their old sin ; and God may complain that they have broken their baptismal Oath : yet Baptism is to them a mean and weak argument of conviction ? When I consider the dulness of profane Christians under the enforcements of their baptism, even Ministerially urged, I could wish according to the sometime custome used in the Primitive times of the Church, when men are baptised they might leave behind them a white garment, as a witness of their baptism, that so we might upbraid wicked men, as the Deacon of the Church did *Elpidaphorus* when revolted from the faith, saying, O, *Elpidaphorus*, *I will keep this white garment as a monument against thee to all eternity* : When I consider the Scripture aggravating guilt with this circumstance, they *have forgotten that they were purged* ; it dictates to my mind that the condemnation of Christians will be more grievous because of their Baptism ; *If this water quench not lust, it will make wrath burn more vehemently* : Though I cannot consent to the Novations cruel and groundless conclusion, *That sin after baptism is unpardonable* ; I dare affirm, *That every sin not resisted by Baptism will be more then ordinarily damnable to the baptized*. What an Answer to every temptation unto sin is the soul furnished withal, that is apprehensive that in *Baptism he did renounce the Flesh, the World and the Devil, and devote himself to a conformity to the death of Christ*, and stands dedicated to an holy God, in whose presence he may not presume defiled with sin ? This Argument if improved by a rational act of faith is of more advantage, because it is plain and common ; ready at hand

hand to reflect, and easie to be understood ; and obvious to the eye of men without, and within the Church, by which we are liable to be upbraided by the very enemies of Christ : That we are baptized the whole Church will witness, and shall not we have recourse unto our Baptism as a bar to our profaneness ? Shall Circumcised *Israel* live in the vileness and vanity of the uncircumcised Gentiles ? And hath God made baptism a badge of distinction between the holy and prophane, and shall we not make it a bar of division between their unclean Lusts and our holy lives ? to live without mortification of sin, and quickening to all holy duties, doth clearly declare we have never yet understood the nature of Baptism, nor used it to its end.

As this deadness in sin, *so the Despondency of the Spirit in Duty*, to which even the best of men are subject, doth witness a disesteem and disregard of their Baptism, of which they can sometime boast, though in it they cannot rejoyce. A right apprehension and real sense of Baptism as the qualification of confident approach to God would dissolve many doubts, if but duely urged by faith. Ordinances of God are given for our *encouragements*, but rational acts of faith must pass from us to enforce them to their end : What is said of the *Word* is true of Baptism, *it profits not, because not mingled with Faith in them that hear it* ; many a sad soul comes trembling into Gods presence, and goes more troubled out, and the reason is, they do not rightly husband Gods ordinances to the soul ; they pass from Ordinance to Ordinance, but never consider the one entitles to, and fits for the enjoyment of another :



nother ; They suck no sweetness from all Sacred administrations , sometimes then abstain from , and oftentimes approach to God in his Ordinances , and the discharge of holy duties , as *afraid* they have no right to , nor fitness for these priviledges , yet are *sanctified by the washing of water* ; they complain they see no interest in the Covenant , and yet *the Seal of the Covenant is in their flesh* ; they cry out they are aliens and strangers to the Commonwealth of Israel , and yet are *baptized into one body*, and incorporated into the Congregation of the Saints ; they dare not call God Father , yet were *children begotten unto him* , bear his mark , and as soon as born were by him owned and placed in the bosome of his Church , and do wear the coat he prepared for his *Joseph* : They see many good things promised in the Covenant , but know not how to claim any of them in Prayer , and yet they have the *Broad-Seal of Heaven to secure their Title*. Unto these souls let me freely say , Shall God give you a ground of encouragement ? will you not use it ? Shall he call for an approach in full assurance , *for that the body is washed with pure water* , and will you not yield it ? Did God mock you when he gave you the dignity of Baptism , or is it not your madness that makes it not a check to your griefs , and curb to your fears ? Shall your practice proclaim the truth of that which the Papists have endeavoured to charge on the reformed Churches , viz, *That they make Baptism nudum signum , a bare empty sign of no use or advantage to the Soul* ? Is Gods seal in vain , and sanctification by the washing of water to no purpose ? and matriculation into his household a mat-

ter of no moment? that thou makest them no ground of Faith, nor encouragement to thy soul? Was not Circumcision of great benefit to the Jews? did not God claim them by it when gone astray from him? and they claim God when deserting them? Is that an engagement to divine faithfulness, and may not thy faith make it thy encouragement to appear before him? did God complement when he annexed Baptism to the Covenant, and called it, *The Seal of the righteousness of faith*? or dost not thou rather cozen thy self of the comforts the Ordinance, do really and according to divine designment exhibit? it is indeed true, Salvation is not conferred *opere operato*, by the *Act done*, and meer application of the water; yet it is thereby *assured to the soul*, that by acts of Faith shall duly argue its interest. The Privy-Seal is the clearest token of affection, and to be pursued, but is the Broad Seal of no authority or advantage to be retained and improved? the *outward Ordinance*, is not without inward grace to be depended on, as sufficient to Salvation, but inward grace duly reflects the outward Ordinance, as Gods great mercy, and the ground of faith and encouragement to it self: The Moral swasion of any Ordinance, is too short to sanctifie or solace any Spirit, without supernatural Grace; but supernatural grace comes not into any soul to convince or comfort, but by a moral improvement of every Ordinance, by rational meditation of its nature, use and end, Many sit under Gods Ordinances, and make most sad complaints, they find no profit in them; when the reason is in themselves; they cry out God must do all, work in them

to will and to do at his own pleasure, which is indeed true ; but they consider not Gods method of working grace, or comfort in any souls ; he always deals with men like themselves as they are reasonable creatures , and have a power of discourse , and therefore his Ordinances are *moral instruments* , by due discourses to enforce their end ; we have reason to check some under the Ordinances as the Disciples were checked from Heaven for their posture in the Lord his ascension , *Ye men of Galilee , why stand ye gazing ? this Jesus that is taken from you, shall so come as you have seen him go into Heaven,* Act. I. 11. As if the voice had said , *Considerations of his return , better become you , then silent observations of his present going.* So I say , Why do many enjoy Gods Ordinances, and not go home and consider them ? must we run so far from free will , as to run out of our wits ? Let such men , as make not their Baptism a moral engagement to, and encouragement in their access to God , know , that they appear *ignorant or sinfully insensible of its nature*, and expose it to great contempt : Can any thing more easily cast a soul into contempt of an Ordinance , then its *unprofitableness and unusefulness* ; The grand cause of all the blasphemy that our Age doth belch out against Baptism , is the *little benefit men finde it brings them* : Not by reason of any defect in the Ordinance , but their own neglect to improve it , as a ground of Faith , guard against sin , and special qualification of access to God.

The fifth sort, that carrie contradictorily to this consecrating nature of Baptism, are such, *who declare not to theirs baptized, the dignity and duty of their Baptisme.* Men do with much zeal present their children to Baptism, but never mind to acquaint them of their priviledge ; or instruct them in the nature of so holy an Ordinance : they are carefull to bring them up to some Trade, or Calling ; to acquaint them with all external rights and priviledges, and the past ground of claim, to all future injoyments in the world ; but education *in the fear and nurture of the Lord*, is to them unusual ; and the affecting them with *baptismal priviledges and Church Rites*, or the acquainting them with *Covenant interest and ground of claim*, as to spiritual mercies and soul enjoyment, is the last and least of their endeavours. Well may we observe, the men of this world are *wiser in their generations, than the children of the Kingdome.* Commonprudence, if Scripture were silent, would direct a more serious instruction of our children, in the nature of their Baptism : Shall they *be begotten to the Lord*, and not be made to know *whose children they are* ? and how they came by that relation ? Shall they *be incorporated into the body of the Church*, and not know *the family and household to which they belong* ? Shall *holinesse* be stamped upon them, and they not be made to know that they are *out of the common lump and mass of mankind* ? Shall the *Covenant of God be in their flesh*, and they not know the *Charter sealed and conditions to be performed* ? In a word shall they be *sanctified by the washing of water*, and not made sensible, that they stand *consecrated unto holy service, and dedicated to the worship of the holy God, Father,*

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*son, and Holy Ghost?* and therefore ought not to stain themselves with guilt, but carrie as an holy people peculiar to the Lord? that they must wait on him, because they wear his livery; and may worship in his presence with confidence, because their bodies have been washed with pure water. I did in the last branch of this Use, blame them that *disesteem and disregard their own Baptism*, and that was but the effect of this sin; Our progenitors neglected us, and we neglected our posterity, as to their instruction in the nature of divine Ordinances. How shall they esteem that, wherein they see no excellencie; or improve that priviledge, of whose nature they are ignorant? How shall they claim the promises, who neither understand *what they are*, or on *what ground to be claimed*? What conscience can they make of duty who do not know themselves under sacred obligation? What confidence can they have in accessse to God, who know not themselves consecrated? If men have in them parental affection to their children, and do care for their future good, we must needs conclude, they sought no more in their Baptisme, than *friends satisfaction, and a formal Religious complement*, and see not any special Soul-saving priviledges thereby conferred? for charity forbids us to think they would bring up their children in the ignorance and incapacity of claiming such *high priviledges*, and rationally improving so *holy engagements*, if themselves were affected with them, or they had any sense of duty as to such *Religious education*; which should indeed spur their *natural affection* to the discharge thereof: Little do men consider that the same God that gave babes the *right* to the initiating  
seales

seales of the Covenant, did provide *catechising*, as the way to make them know their priviledge. He to whom they are born, hath provided *milk* for their nourishment, no less then *meat* for stronger men; and hath committed them as his lambs, to the care of his Church, and charged it, as the duty of their Parents to *educate them in the fear and nurture of the Lord*: So that such Parents who do not seriously instruct their seed in the *solemn Bond* of their relation to God and his Church; the *suitable qualification* by which they are fitted for divine communion; and the *seal of the Covenant*, that assureth them of the high priviledges of Salvation: do not only *slight* this holy Ordinance of Baptism, but also sinfully *transgress* Gods command; shew their natural affection to be diverted from its right channel, *care for the chiefest good*; and set their children under an inevitable necessity of sleighting the Ordinance, and starting aside from God, to whom they know no relation: Wee find i our grief, that our children are *profane*, when it is no other than the production of *our own neglect*: We can easily complain of their impieties; but where is the man, that as soon as his child is sensible, doth season him with the knowledge of his miserie by sin, Gods mercy in the Covenant of Grace, and his special engagement to holiness, for that he bears on him the name of God from his very *birth*, and that *imprinted by his Baptisme*, when his body was washed with pure water.

The sixth and last sort, whose principles and practises do plainly militate against the nature of baptism, and clearly do contradict the same, are such,  
who



who deny the baptized the liberty of access to God in the Assemblies of his people. This I well know to relate unto the most eminent professors of Gospel order, and pretenders unto piety, that are among us; and therefore the most tender rebuke will seem to be railing violence and bitterness: But be it what it will, sin against Gods Ordinances must not pass without a zealous and serious Reproof: Such among us as affect the term of *Congregational brethren*, in the gathering of their Churches, run into an extream as far wide on the one hand, as the loose, levelling Familists and Anabaptists are on the other: these dictate a liberty of access to the unbaptized, and those deny it to the baptized. We must needs imagine they agree both in one principle, that *Baptism is not the ground of communion with the Church visible*, nor qualification of access to God; For if it be otherwise, as we have noted, it must be *prophaness* to admit without it; and they have need of good warrant that will acquit themselves from *impiety*, in excluding the baptized from these priviledges. That such are among us, who debar the baptized from their priviledges, is so obvious to every observant eye of the now only cryed up *Church way*, that I need not much urge demonstrations thereof: I well know some whose practice proclaim it, in their principles will disown it: but it is the property of that *congregating way*, to couch their principles until their practice have proved their truth and goodness, and proclaimed them to others: But if in the terms charged any shall deny this to be acted among us, I shall desire to understand why they declare privately, and publicly men baptized to be strangers to God and his Covenant? why do they decline

*decline Communion with, and a care of baptized souls, as members of the Church? and dictate a necessity of their coming into Church way and fellowship? and why do they direct other ways for admission of Church Members? is there any terms more ordinary in the mouths of the congregated Saints towards those whom they live amongst, than Dogs, without, unbelievers, not in a Church way? Do not the pastors of these private (it may offend if I say separate) Assemblies in their publique Ministry, speak unto their baptized hearts, as aliens and strangers to the Covenant and Common-wealth of Israel, men in the High-ways and Hedges? Do they not call them into their self congregated and constituted Churches, as the only Churches of Jesus Christ? Do not the particular members of these assemblies appropriate to themselves the Title of Saints, beleviers, the people of God, the brethren? If they know or deal with a man professing the same God and Christ, baptized, and of a godly conversation, but not in their Church-way, they cannot know him in any Christian relation; but can oppose to him a member of their private Assembly, by the name of brother such an one---, as if the other were no brother: Nay further, do not they decline communion with the baptized even such whom they cannot charge with any visible prophaneness, and against whom the Church never proceeded in censure? Hence they withdraw themselves from publique assemblies in their special administration of Church priviledges, denominate themselves the Church, and decline all Church actions towards such as come not into their Church-ways; though their Pastors will possess the places,*

places, and make a shift to compel the (late cried down) *parochial maintenance*, yet of the people in common they take no charge: *Brethren* will not own them as objects of first or second admonition; *Pastors* will neither admit to the Lords Table the unblameable parents, nor *Baptise* or *Catechise* their Children, nor exercise any act of discipline towards the disorderly, in order to their conviction and salvation; but in all things so demean themselves towards the *baptized* as men without the pale of the Church, meer heathen; for Church ministrations are as much reserved from them as from such who never yet had holiness stamped on them: And if any do incline to associate with them in the holy things of God, they must be *admitted Members*, and enter at the door of a *Church Covenant*, or mutual agreement among themselves, and declaration of the work of grace upon their hearts, and their experiences of God, which these *Congregational-men* have set up? If this dialect and deportment do not declare that liberty of access to God, in the Assemblies of his people is *denied to the baptized*, I know not how to judge it: And how this will consist with the nature, use and end of Baptism, I cannot discern: If by the washing of *water*, *we were sanctified*, how were we prophaned and again laid common? I never yet could understand any *divine rejection*; I am sure it is much contrary to Gods wonted method and patience, to cast off a people adhering to him, though subject to many *aberrations* and *vile actions* towards him; and the extraordinary pleasure of God is yet to be manifested: And if *God count us holy*, and continue the liberty of our access to him in his Ordinance,

dinance, they must produce a good commission that shall cast *us out, as prophane and unclean*, if they expect we should be therewithal contented: If Baptism do *incorporate into the Church of God*, doth it not intitle to all the priviledges of the Church, and bind us to use them, and the Church to allow us the use of them, according to our capacity? If we are *baptized into one body*, have we not the same relation to them that others have? Are we not all of one family, members of one body, and brethren, sons of the same Father? Ought not all the Church to be the Pastors charge? Is not the *rebuke of the disorderly*, his duty, as well as his *encouragement of the orderly*? Doth not *Baptism so knit us one unto another*, that we are bound to watch over one another, and do all brotherly duties? Why else doth the Apostle make it an Argument, there is *one Baptism, Eph. 4. we are all baptized into one body*? I would fain know of what use Baptism is to them? is it not the same to others baptized? To count the baptized *Dogs, men without*, to disow the *brotherhood*, and the like, must needs deny that *Baptism is the door of admission into the Church*; and yet this in terms they will not say, though they carry towards them as without, and call them to be members of the Church, who already are members of the Church on as good a ground & as clear a method as themselves: If this be not a solecism in Christianity, I know not how to make any: As for their admission into the Church by *Covenant, Agreement, or Profession*, it is cleerly without *Scripture prescription, or primitive president*, that ever I could yet find: and I can deem it no other then an *humane invention* (if I may not call it superstition,

the countenance of which it bears in my eye, whilst it stands in the place of Baptism, and is made the onely way of consecration unto Church communion, whereby it plainly supplants Gods Ordinance.) These things I note, but cannot stand to debate, intending a reproof, not dispute, and to let men see the sinfulness of this *sacred way of Independency*, and gathering of Churches out of Churches, whilst it stands guilty of a contempt of *Gods way of access unto him*, and admission into his Church; of *censorious uncharitableness* towards their brethren invested with the reason of relation to the Lords people; and of *constitution of Church Membership*, in a way of meer humane invention. I confess I have heard it often noted, that the difference between *Independents and others*, is not so much as to maintain an irreconcilable distance; and I say so too: I could wish they were more friendly united: As to the single point of *Discipline*, they shall have my consent for a brotherly toleration of its exercise, till they are weary of it: But as for their separation from the Churches of *Jesus Christ*, *self-congregation into a Church*, and *seclusion of baptized souls*, from sacred Ordinances, and the like, they seem to me so *repugnant to truth and order*; and *ruinous to Gods Church and Ordinances*, that I cannot without sin, but stand a professed enemy thereunto. Let not men think that I *allow the prophaneness of Christians*, because I *alledge* their interest in the common administration of the Covenant; or that I think their enjoyment may not be interrupted, because I cannot consent their interest be denied them: I have learned to distinguish between *right and possession*; and where



where the one is clear, the other may be justly sometimes with-held: I well know prophane Christians are *unseemly Saints*, yet *Saints*; *scandalous Disciples*, yet *Disciples*; *disorderly Brethren*, yet *Brethren*; *vessels of dishonour*, yet *Vessels in the same house to the Masters use*. That Church members be for a time suspended from particular priviledges, may be admitted; but to private brethrens pleasure to be *sleighted as no members*, is not to be endured: That obstinate incurable members be cut off, is the *Church her duty*; but that the Church be *cast off*, is the *congregational impiety*? Is there *baptized persons*, in works denying the God they profess? Is there a *brother* a drunkard, an adulterer, and the like? Doth not, Baptism appropriate them to the private admonition of particular brethren, and publique inspection of Church Officers? *Is not the delivering them to Satan, for the buffeting of the flesh, that the soul may be saved*, their priviledge by baptism? If these holy men would talk of *correcting*, *casting out*, *cutting off* disorderly baptized souls, it would sound well in my ears; but to talk of *gathering Churches*, *coming into Church-way*, *admission of Members*, and the like, amongst those that bears holiness in their flesh, and have on them the qualification of access to God, sounds so harshly in my ears, that I cannot but abhor it, as *inconsistent with the nature of Baptism*, exposing it to contempt, making it of no effect, endangering the *subversion of the Church*, and the ushering in of *Paganism*; whilst the baptized find themselves rejected, and not looked after, as of any relation to God; they cannot but resign up themselves to their own lusts, and run into an ignorance



of, and estrangedness to God. It seems to me a most just Plea, that is made by Christians in common; *Were we baptized? why are we disowned, as to relation to God and his Church, and cast out of all the care of the Church, as if we were thereunto strangers? If the Seal of God be on us, why do our brethren lift up themselves above us, and engross to themselves the titles, terms, priviledges, that belong in common to all baptized souls? If we walk worthy our relation, we are willing to be corrected; but must we needs lose our interest and be thrust out of our fathers inheritance by our brethren, our forfeiture never being judicially exacted? Gods Ordinances we could bear though never so cross to our nature, because thereunto we are bound by our Baptism; but the new ways pursued by our brethren, and to us proposed, are grievous to us, because we find them not in the grand Charter of our priviledge; willingly we would walk with God in duty, and draw nigh to him in the Assemblies of his people, for that we are thereunto consecrated; but herein we are debarr'd, and driven at a distance, as if Dogs, not Children; Heathens, not Christians; Aliens to the Covenant, not Heirs of Grace.\* If we go astray, we think those that are set over ought to seek us as Sheep, not suffer us to wander as Goats. We have cause to complain, that our Shepherds feed themselves, not the Flock; they feed upon the flock, and cloath them with the wool: kill the fat, but feed not the sheep: The weak they have nor strengthened, the sick they have not healed, not have they sought that which was lost, nor brought again, that which was driven away; but with cruelty and rigor have they ruled us: We were scattered without a Shepherd; and when*

*we were dispersed, every beast of the field devoured us: We were sheep, though wandring upon every high hill and mountain; Gods Flock, though scattered through the earth, and none sought after us.* If the Lord Jesus subscribe and accept not this complaint as just and good, I know nothing of Gospel method or order.

Thus then I have noted the *vanity and vileness* of those, whose carriage contradicts the nature of Baptism, and bespeaks them *insensible of it*, as an especial qualification for confidence in access to God in the Assemblies of his people.

The third and last Use of this Doctrine, is by way of *Exhortation* unto two especial duties.

First, Acquaint we our selves with the holy nature of Baptism.

Secondly, Act we the course of our lives and carriage, as those whose bodies are washed with pure water.

Of these give me leave to speak a word in their order, and first of the first.

*Acquaint we our selves with the holy nature of baptism;* Understand its end, use, and effects: Labour we to know the holiness it stampson any; the priviledges it confers; and how it confers them; see we the divine institution enforcing the duty of subjection to it, and the dignity received by it. Ignorance is the Nursery of Error, and Guard of all Prophaneness: All those ordinances degrading, and vilifying notions that are conceived in mens minds, all those blasphemies belched out of their mouths, and all that contemptible carriage under and towards baptism and the baptized, which we have before taxed, are no other then the mists and filthy fogs of a blind mind,

mind, to be dispersed by a right apprehension of the holy nature thereof: Ignorance is noted in Scripture as the ground of *Israels* impiety: very often doth God complain, *they know not me and are a people who wil not understand; my people perish for lack of knowledge?* Knowledge is the propounded cure of all prophaneſs and contempt of holy things: it is the principle of Regeneration *to be renewed in the ſpirit of the minde*. Our Saviour corrects the prophanaſion of the Temple by an, *it is written, my houſe ſhall be called, an houſe of prayer;* and diſpels all rude traditions, which made the Law of God of none effect, by an *expoſition of the Law*: And the Apoſtle corrects the prophane uſe of the Lords Supper, by explaining the nature, form, and uſe thereof, telling them ſometime *this is not to eat the Lords Supper;* and other times pointing to the Ordinance, by a, *The Cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is the Communion;* and an, *I received from the Lord, what I delivered unto you*. The ſame is to be the cure of the prophaneſs of every Ordinance of God, (*viz.*) the underſtanding of its uſe and nature. They that know not the benefit of a Deniſon of *England*, or a Freeman of *London*, muſt needs diſeſteem, diſregard, and deſpiſe the priviledges thereof. Is it any marvel to hear men ſpeak, and ſee men carry contemptibly towards a ſealed parchment, whoſe uſe and nature he doth not underſtand? but ſuch as know thereof the uſe and value, will purchaſe them at a dear rate, and priſe them above many things ſimply, and in themſelves more conſiderable. In a word, I muſt ſay, if men knew that Gods *image and authority* was ſet on Baptiſm, they would not dare to diſpiſe its *ſimplicity and meaneſs*: If they under-

understood it to be the *door of admission into the Church, incorporation into Christs body, and method of matriculation into the household of Faith*, they could never scorn it, or sit indifferent to it; but must see, as ever they will *put on Christ Jesus*, and be united to *his body*, they must be baptized; nay further, such as are sensibly affected with it as a *Seal of the Covenant of grace*, and so ground of faith, as a sacred qualification of approach to God, without which we may not come nigh unto him; and as the ordained *Ark of Salvation*, whereby we stand separated from the world unto so great advantages; he could not but set on it an high esteem, rejoicing in his *baptism*, blessing God for such distinguishing grace, and thankfully improve the same to his encouragement in, and engagement unto duty. Let it therefore be your care with all diligence, to study the nature of the Ordinance, and understand its use, vertue and value; that by ignorance you lose not its effects, or be led into erroneous notions, luke-warm affections to, and prophane expressions towards so holy and necessary an Ordinance.

The second Exhortation is, *To att our conversation, as sensible, that the body washed with pure water, must qualifiens with confidence in access to God.* Let your knowledge of the right use and nature of Baptism appear in your lives and carriage under, and towards so holy an Ordinance: Take heed of prophaning holy things, disesteeming high priviledges, and contemning special grounds of faith and priviledges of grace: and more particularly,

1. Direct. *Admit not men into communion with the Church in other Ordinances and acts of worship, that have not been baptized.* Let them enter at the right door, that receive Gods alms: Call not them the Lords people, who wear not the Lords livery: communicate not the privileges of the Saints, with them who stand Aliens and Strangers to the Commonwealth of Israel: Let not them approach the presence of an holy God, who were never sanctified by the washing of water by the word: And in a word, take heed of running into the abomination of bringing into Gods Sanctuary, the *unbaptized in flesh*: Invert not Gods order and the Gospel method of approach to God. These might have seemed needles exhortations heretofore, but now do not; for that many in the midst of us do not onely disown their own baptism, but their Issue unbaptized; And great is the present, and greater will be the future danger of admitting to sit at the Lords Table, such as *never were baptized*: I could heartily wish we could keep a Register of the *unbaptized*, as we do of the *baptized*: However, let the administrators of holy things, make it their first enquiry, *Were you baptized?* and take heed they pollute not Gods Sanctuarie, by admitting thereunto the men whose *bodies were not washed with pure water*: Be not deceived with a pretence of *reall* grace; for *grace* must needs be pretended, where any of Gods Ordinances are despised, and Christs prescribed order is neglected; but if it were *reall*, it is not the Churches guide, who cannot know it: Outward qualifications must be their direction, and Gospel order in peoples approach to God, is their charge and must be their care.

2. Direct.

2. Direct. *Attend with reverence and affection, the administration of Baptisme unto others.* Turn not your backs on so holy an Ordinance and eminent action; but consider it is *an act of worship, and Ordinance of God*, as well as preaching or prayer; and our attendance on all acts of Religion, is duty; it is a *solemn and sacred action*, separating persons unto God, *sanctifying them for God, stamping upon men holiness to the Lord, setting them as members of the Church, the body of Christ*; and *solemnly dedicating them to the service of Father, Son, and holy Ghost.* And doth not this call for the attendance of all the Lords people? Shall not the worth of union with Christs Church, and consecration to God, be witnessed to be of weight by the reverent attendance of the Assemblie? Are not all concerned in, and to be edified by the Ordinance, and shall they sleight it, and turn back on it? Consider the reproof of the guilt of such neglect: let it quicken you to duty: let your presence at, and reverence in the admistration of Baptisme, bespeak your sense of its sacred nature and sanctifying use; making a Church Ordinance private by confining it to your houses, or running from its administration in the publique place, must needs be the result of low thoughts. *Clandestine baptism, is the cloud of Baptism*; and the rude out-running that Ordinance, runs it into contempt; be witnesses of their *incorporation* with whom you must live in communion in Gods Ordinances.

3. Direction. *Argue your Baptism to your engagement to, and encouragement in drawing nigh to God.* Your bodies are washed with pure water, provoke

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your Spirits to draw nigh in the assurance of faith : Consider that by your baptisme, you are *singled out of the world*, and set in a capacity of Salvation: You are *placed in the Ark* ; will you *perish* in the common deluge of mankind ? You <sup>are</sup> *sanctified unto God by the washing of water* ; will you stand at a distance from God, as strangers to him ? You are ~~are~~ in the order of his own appointment; *suites for divine society* ; will you live as without God, without hope in the world ? You are the *sealed Sons and Subjects of the Covenant* ; and will you pass away your time as Bankrupts, that possess nothing ? You have *put on Jesus Christ his livery* ; will you not do him homage with all chearfull loyalty ? You are *entred into the househould of faith and Church of God* ; shall not their communion be to you comfortable ? Is not Baptism a *ground of faith and encouragement* ; why are you then so dispondent in appearing before God ? Is it not your *solemn Bond unto divine service* ; why are you then so dull and backward unto duty ? Was your Baptism a *meer complement*, that you doe not mind it or make use of it now it is past ? Is it not a *moral instrument* to be improved by meditation, affording matter of *counsel and comfort* ? Nay is it not *Gods Ordinance, a ground of faith, pledge of love, badge of relation*, to be argued into the awe and encouragement of our access to God ? Is not Baptism an *initiating seal* : assuring us of initiating graces ? hath it not *planted* us into the Olive, that we might extract sap and juyce to the bringing forth fruits of Righteousnesse ? In a word, Baptism is greatly advantageous to *hope and holiness*, if but duly improved by *acts of Faith*. We find no profit in it, because we look for none from

from it. If right assured, be never claimed, how shall it be possessed? If sin-mortifying engines be never used, sin must needs have dominion over the soul: I would to God, I could but perswade Christians to sit down, and seriously contemplate their *Baptism* in order to their holiness, and thus reflect it. I am baptized: *Surely then I am under some more than ordinary engagement: Therereby* I was washed from old sins; *shall I then live in them, or so far forget my self, as not to let* vertue, knowledge, temperance, brotherly kindnesse, patience, godliness, all the graces of God to abound in me? *Is not Baptism the dew of Heaven, that waters the Garden of God? Hath it been distilled on me, and shall I be found idle and unfruitfull,* 2 Per. 1. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. I have been baptized into the death of Christ, buried with him in Baptisme, *planted into the similitude of his death, that my old man might be crucified, and the body of sin destroyed, that I should not serve sin; but as he was raised up from the dead, I should walk in newness of life: and shall sin reign in my mortal body that I should obey the lusts thereof; or shall I give my members as weapons of unrighteousness unto sin,* Rom. 6. *I have by Baptisme, been consecrated unto God; and shall I not come nigh him in duty? I am incorporated into the Church; ought I not then to be conversant in the Assembly of the first born? I have stricken Covenant with God; will not my neglect of duty, and course of impiety be charged on me, as the breach of the oath of God? All the promises of grace are to me sealed; shall not I then cleanse my self from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness? In a word, Baptism is the seal of the Covenant*

set in my flesh, *and the* causing me to see the evil of my ways and doings, and to be ashamed and forsake them; the taking away the stony heart, and giving an heart of flesh; the putting Gods Spirit within me, that I may walk in his ways, *are the promises of the Covenant; why then do not graceless I claim them, and by prayer plead my baptism for the obtainment of them? For he is faithful that hath promised, but will not perform, until they be asked in faith:* And as our baptism is thus a moral argument of holiness to our selves, it is the more helpful hereunto, because it answers all temptations unto sin. When we are assaulted with the pollutions that are in the world through lust, we may answer, *we are washed with pure water*, and may not be again defiled: *The cogency of custom must give place to the Covenant we have made in baptism:* The violent temptations of Satan recoil upon the returns of baptism: *I am baptized*, silenceth all suggestions to sin: *I am baptized into the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, is the onely Spel (to speak with reverence) that charms the Devil. For it imports thus much: Shall the Children of God converse with his Enemies? the confederates of God break his commands? the separated out of the world, be subject to the Prince of the World? Or doth malicious Satan think the sealed of the Lord, shall be so much sleighted by their Lord, as to be taken captive at his will? Oh! play the man in a rational management of your baptism, it will much advance your Christianity all your days.

As Baptism is *an help* to holiness, so also *to hope*; to be improved by due Acts of faith, as it is an Ordinance of God, for our encouragement in access to him: many souls stand at a distance from divine Ordinances; or draw nigh with much trembling, which would be dispelled by due apprehensions of Baptism: Let such therefore consider, that under the want of special, they ought to rejoyce in general expressions of Gods love, and arguments of *hope*; and immediate assurances of divine favour are not to be expected, whilst we have mediate Ordinances on which to act our Faith: *Our hope* must come into the soul in the same way, *with holiness*, by a moral improvement of Gods Grace, in his Ordinances to us extended; let therefore the desponding Christian, that trembles to converse with Gods people, to come nigh Gods Table, or claim any of Gods promises, sit down and seriously discourse his Baptism. *I am Baptized; was this an empty Ordinance? Shall my unbelieving heart imagine any divine institution to be empty and in vain imposed? No, All the ways of God are truth, he never subjected souls to any fallacy, nor can do: Why then art thou so sad O my soul? trust still in God, in him will I hope, for he hath established a Covenant of peace extended to my Parents, and through them to me, and set the Seal thereof, Baptism, in my flesh; and is not Baptism a pledge of his affection to me, a badge of my relation to him? Why then do I say he knows me not, or I belong not to him? Do all the Sons of Adam wear this livery? Is there a speciality in the application of water; and hath it not extended to me? shall I say I have received no favour peculiar*  
to

to the Lords people, and distinct from the mass of mankind? Nay, I am by baptism a matriculate Disciple in Christ his School, an incorporated Member of the household of Faith? Why then do I fear to feed on childrens bread? and to use thou priviledges that do belong to the Citizens of the New Jerusalem? Why am I as an alien and stranger from the common wealth of Israel? I have by Baptism put on Jesus Christ, and shall I fear to come before the Father? is not he his beloved Son in whom he is well pleased? Is not Baptism a Seal of Gods Covenant? why then do I not claim the promises? What though I see not Gods privy Seal, the Spirit of adoption; is the broad Seal of the Covenant of no force and value; doth it in vain bear on it divine authority? why then is it called the Ark of Salvation? why hath God said, he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved? Shall I lose my salvation, for not joyning faith to my baptism? What though I find many rude Christians and prophane persons in the Church claiming priviledges by their Baptism; can I deny in some things their claim to be good, though they be wicked? And wherein it is not good to them, breaking the Covenant, may it not be good to me, poor me, that desire to keep the covenant of my God? In a word, hath not God sanctified me to himself, by the washing of water; and doth he not call men to draw nigh to him in assurance of faith, having the body washed with pure water, and shall I be dismayed in access to him? Oh! the wickedness of my doubting, that doth spring from ignorance of Gods holy Ordinances! the sin of my despondency, that deters me from duty, and exposeth my baptism to contempt? I will sure cast off this estate, and hence-  
for-

*forward continue with the Church in the Word, break-  
of bread, and prayer, and use of all other privi-  
ledges of grace; and composedly prize the benefit of  
Ordinances, that by rational acts of faith in them, I  
may at length arrive at the fulness of assurance:* Thus  
then Christians argue to your selves, the duty and  
dignity of your baptism, enjoy with comfort the  
priviledges thereby conferred: Know and approve  
your selves as baptised: and thereby

*Singled out of the World by Baptism, and set in a  
capacity of Salvation, as was Noahs family in the Ark,  
1 Pet. 3. 21.*

*Sanctified unto God, Baptism being the so-  
lemn form of consecration, Eph. 5. 26.*

*Sons and Subjects of the covenant, invested with  
Christ, incorporated into his Church, the seal of which  
is in your flesh by baptism.*

*Suited for divine Society, by the expiation of  
guilt, extirpation of sins power, and exact confe-  
deration with God; all which the Scriptures note,  
to be the effect of Baptism, or the washing of the  
body with purwater.*

In the apprehension and argumentation of these  
priviledges, let me guide your judgements by pro-  
pounding to your consideration, these several rules  
of Caution.

1. Rule. *Salvation and Sanctification, and the like  
priviledges, are naturally argued from Baptism, as it  
is an Ordinance of God ordained to that end.* There-  
fore the effects are to it attributed: It in all things  
necessary bears an analogy with Circumcision, and  
propounds moral considerations to that end, to the  
reaso-



reasonable soul of man, to be argued by contemplative acts of faith.

2. Rule. *All that will be sanctified, saved, and enjoy the before noted priviledges, must be baptized.* All that will in any ordinary way possess them (for extraordinary providences are beyond the reach of our debate) must be baptized: not onely on the necessity of a command from God, but the nature of the Ordinance, being the means appointed, rightly constituted, and readily conduive to such an end: So that none *unbaptized*, can on any ground expect to enjoy, nor may warrantbly be admitted to the priviledges of a sanctified and saved people of the Lord.

3. Rule. *Some baptized, enjoy these priviledges of salvation, sanctification, and the like, visibly and symbolically; others, really, sincerely, and savingly.* Some are *seemingly* saved and sanctified in the sight of men and esteem of the Church: These enjoy the outward Ordinance only, and that is the guide and ground of humane censure, and the judgement of the Church: Hence the term *Saint, Beleiver, Disciple, Brother*, is in Scripture given, and must be by the Church yeilded to *Hypocrites*; yea, to visible prophane persons, but *baptized*: but others are *sincerely and savingly* possessed of these priviledges, not onely in the judgement of the Church, but by the Testimony of their own conscience and spirit of adoption. These enjoy not onely the outward sign, but also the inward grace of baptism; have not only the *body washed with pure water*, but also the heart  
*sprinkled*

*sprinkled from an evil conscience* : The outward Ordinance and inward grace are sometimes divided, according to the visible and invisible ministration of the Covenant : Baptism is to all, the same in its nature, but not in its effects : it is in it self efficacious to all, but in some, not meeting with due capacity, acts of faith, to improve it, it becomes not effectual. Many baptized, and by the Church called *heirs of glory*, lose their hopes, holiness, and heaven it self; not because Baptism did not seal it, and confer a ground or right, but because the soul acted not faith in the right unto the claim of what was conferred : None so deservedly lose their inheritance as those who improve not their sealed evidence to a due claim, Take heed lest there be among you a prophane *Esau*, heirs of his Fathers blessing, who for a mess of Pottage sold his birth-right. Men in the Church contented with Creature-comforts, claim not the priviledges of the Covenant conferred by their Baptism, and so lose their birth-right.

4. Rule. The outward priviledges of Baptism enjoyed visibly and in the judgement of the Church, may be forfeited, and by the censures of the Church taken away. A brother may be made as a Publican and Heathen; a member of Christs body may be cut off; and a Servant of God may be delivered unto Satan; the Citizens of *Jerusalem* may be disfranchised: private persons may not at pleasure disown baptized souls; but the publique censures of the Church, if unworthy their received Baptism, may discharge them Church communion, and divest them of salvation,

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tion, sanctification, interest in the Covenant, which *clave non errante*, the Church not erring, is ratified in Heaven, as well as in the Church visible upon earth.

5. Rule. *Salvation, Sanctification, and the privileges of the Covenant, may by Baptism be conferred on them who are not sensible of the Ordinance, or in a present capacity of using them.* Right may be formally conferred, where it is not presently acted. The King may be crowned in the Cradle, the crown be set on his head as token of right, before his hand can hold the Scepter: Present incapacity of use is no bar to the laying the foundation of a future claim. Many men at years, must review the Decrees concerning their estates, which were sealed in Infancy: Infants may have their Baptism as soon as born, whereby they must claim the Covenant, when they come to years of capacity.

6. Rule. *The baptized, not arguing joy and duty from their baptism, do against the nature of the ordinance: and either disown its institution to that end, or deny its efficacy thereunto, and disesteem its specialty, as related to the Covenant and people of God: Therefore deliver we our selves from sin, and let us carefully improve our baptism as the qualification that fits us for a confidence in approach to God.*

The fourth direction or particular exhortation, is to Parents, Christian Parents. *With ardent care and affection,*

*fection, present your Infants unto baptisme, and instruct them in their baptismal priviledge. Your children may, nay must, by your care, come nigh to God. Let them then be consecrated ; they are as your natural issue, an holy seed begotten to the Lord : Holy in the esteem of the Church, and extent of the Covenant ; partakers of the fatnes of the Olives ; Heirs of the promise of Remission and Salvation ; children of the Covenant ; bearing Christ his Name, as his Disciples to be received, not offended, as we have before proved, And shall not they come nigh to God, enter into his Sanctuary, be joyned to the assemblies of his people ? Hath not Christ said to the rebukers of such approach, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for such are of the kingdome of heaven, and capable of my blessing ? and shall not then Infants be admitted members of Christ his body, and have the seal of the Covenant set in their flesh, and holiness stamped on them ? Shall they not be consecrated to the Lord : hath not the Lord appointed the same sanctifying Ordinance to root and branches ? and will you not with care and affection pursue it ? Shall God give your children Covenant interest, and shall not your paternal care provide for the confirmation of it, by the seal of which they are capable ? Would you not affectionately contend for their interest in a worldly estate ? neglect it not in an heavenly : but when God gives you children, be carefull with all convenient speed, to give them back again to God : When you have brought forth heirs of the Covenant, with due reverence bring them to Gods Church, to be inrolled, and have their interest sealed by Baptisme : Provoke not God to meet with you,*

as with *Moses*, for your neglect of sanctifying your seed by his holy Ordinances : Let not your children have cause to curse and complain of your neglect of their baptism. Let not your affection to your Infants baptism be cooled, or care for it be checked by the foolish exceptions of their adversaries, whilst you see their interest is cleer. What if it be objected, that all the arguments for their Baptisme is by way of inference and consequence ? Is not Scripture consequence, Gods word binding conscience, produced by our Saviour as a ground of faith, to prove the Resurrection and his own sufferings ? Is it a sufficient warrant of womens receiving the Lords Supper, and will it not prove Infants right to Baptisme ? and direct the subjects to whom a sacred Ordinance must be applied ? I have before evidenced Infants right to *Baptisme*, and given sufficient answer to the objections urged against it : I would now engage you Parents to make conscience of your duty to *baptize* your children : Contract not on your selves the guilt of the sacrilege before noted ; and the more to encourage you hereunto, let me shew you some of those many advantages that attend the *infant season of Baptism*, wherein it is to be preferred before *baptism at grown years* : Reverend Mr. *Forde*, in his practicall use of Infant-Baptisme, hath very affectionately enforced this argument, and shewed many benefits ; I refer you serionly to read them And for your present help, let me wish you to consider, that *Infant Baptism* confers on us these several priviledges, which adult Baptisme leave us without.

1. Infant Baptisme expresseth sins nature.
2. Explaineth the benefit of Relation, and the method

method of the Covenant, and eminently dignifyeth the children of such parents.

3. Enlargeth and establistheth the Church.
4. Exciteth Repentance.
5. Enforceth Faith.
6. Engageth duty.
7. Encourageth unto death.

None of these do so naturally flow from the baptisme of men of grown years, as we shall plainly see by a particular consideration of them.

The first benefit by Infant Baptisme is, That it *expresseth the sin of nature, and engageth against it.* Baptism doth it self declare sin to be *defiling*, but the *spreading property* thereof is evidenced by *Infant Baptism*. They that are *washed*, must needs witnesse they were *unclean*; but *their early Baptisme*, must needs note their uncleanness is *in their nature*, not in their persons; for poor Babes, they have acted neither good nor evil: That Babes must bear the pain of Circumcision bespeaks a foreskin upon their heart, that makes them prophane to God. The Baptism of men at years, doth indeed minde them that they are *filthy*, but that is a filthiness of their person, evidencing that they having committed many actual corruptions, that appears to them: but that they are *transgressors from the womb, conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity*, of a prophane lump, and *polluted in their very being*; it no way at all convinceth; no, that is the language of the *baptized* before actuall sin. The *baptisme* and *burial* of our babes, hath ever been in the Church of God, two unanswerable arguments against the *Pelagian* fancie, that *children have no inbred corruption, but sin by imitation*: If we give  
away



away the first, it is just God should take away the second, by giving us barren wombs, Infants Baptisme was urged by *Austin* against *Pelagius*, to the puzzling of him in his denyal of original sin: yet he never denyed them to be baptized, which had been a ready answer; nor was he ever able to withstand the consequence: For if baptized before *polluted in person*, they must needs be *unclean in nature*; before *actuell sin* pass from them, *original sin* must needs be upon them, before they are capable of any *imitation*, then they must needs be the subjects of *imbred corruption*: For Baptisme cannot be denyed to be Gods Ordinance of *Remission and Regeneration*; and further, this evidence of hereditarie sin must needs engage *hereditarie enmity*, and so irreconcilable hatred, much more violent and implacable than that which is *personal*, being inforced by the antiquity of the quarrel: it runs in a blood, and passeth from parents to children I have observed a great aptitude in the enemies of Infants Baptisme, to embrace the Arminian fancies, and deny all *original sin*: And it is no marvel, whilst their principles are so neer of kin; one Error will easily ingender another. As ever you will make visible the *sin of nature*, baptize your babes before they be stained with *actuell guilt*.

The second Benefit of Infant Baptisme is, That it *explaineth the benefit of Relation, and the method of transmitting the Covenant of Grace*. Baptisme, as a seal of the Covenant, sheweth interest in the Covenant, and the benefit of *personal qualification* that fits for it; but it is the *Infant season*, that sheweth that God hath wisely ordered *Grace to run in natures channel*; and *parental relation*, under such

a qualification as *Beleiving*, to engender a propriety to baptism. He that first receives the Patent of honour, can discern no benefit of *relation*; save what is future; and if this patent be onely personal, he seeth none at all: but *hereditary honours* are demonstrations of *relation* and its advantage; hereby a man knows what his benefit is, in being the *Child of a Baron or Earl*, rather than of a *common Knight or Gentleman*: Baptism applied to men of years, doth indeed demonstrate a Covenant of grace granted on good behaviour unto every individual person; but wholly obliterate the *seeds* interest and extent of the Covenant unto natural *issue*, in order to their good behaviour; It declareth expressly, that as to the speciality of Gods grace, *relation to beleiving Parents*, is no privilege: As good be the child of *Ammon*, as of *Abraham*; of a Pagan as a Christian: which is clearly contrary to the tenure of the Covenant, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed: The promise is to you and your Children*: and the ground of applying the initiating seal, is relation to such Parents. Therefore every man child at eight daysold, shall be circumcised, that thereby it may appear, the order of my Covenant is, to *beleiving Parents*, and their seed, and the benefit of relation to such Children shall be, that *I will be their God*. Relation to the Olive, is the reason of the branches fatness: The Jews relation to their pious progenitors, is the onely remaining hope of their conversion, they are beloved of God, *according to election, for the fathers sake*, Rom. II. 28. If we will maintain the knowledge of *relative advantages in the Covenant of Grace*, carefully baptize we our babes in their  
Infancy,

*Infancy*, as the plainest comment thereon: so when they shall consider themselves to have been sealed and sanctified to God, before they had in themselves the least of personal qualification; they will bless God for the *Covenant of their fathers*, and the *extent of it to the seed of believers*, and giving them to be born of such favourites to Heaven: the great assertors of the Baptism of grown persons, to defend their notion, do in the ministration of grace, darken all relation, and disfranchise all posterity, interpreting the clear text of Scripture, *The promise is to you and your Children*, by a personal qualification, when *God shall call them*; as if the Holy Ghost had spoken nonsense, and used a term of relation in vain, and to no purpose: But certainly when God established a Covenant of Grace, he did not invert natures course, but provided relation to the privileges thereof in his Church, as well as other advantages in the world; nor did he in the least, intend Religion to be an abridgement of parental right, and power of dedication of their seed to the service of their God, as well as designation to any worldly trade: and therefore he appointed a seal of his Covenant, and sacred Bond to his own service, whereby subjects meerly passive (as was before noted) might be at the pleasure of Parents to him presented: And hereof *Infant Baptism*, is the onely visible evidence in the whole World: *Root and Branches, Parents and children*, are always homogeneous: Nature makes all relations to be of the same kind; and Grace, not inverting Nature's order, will have the children, *by the dignity of a sacred Ordinance, to be declared of the holy kind*, with their Parents; and by

by this religious badge of Baptisme, be distinguished from other Children of Turks, Jews, and Pagans, who like their Parents, remain prophane and estranged unto God : And thus Infant Baptisme, doth not only evidence *relation* and its benefit, the method and order of the Covenant to *men within, but also to men without the Church*, that it may be to them an encouragement to lay hold on the Covenant of God, for that they do not only provide for their own *personal term*, but see Grace also *extended to their issue*, on the very ground of relation natural unto them, under a Christian qualification. And this is especially profitable to the Jew, who having had the Covenant of God to themselves and *seed natural*, as *their seed*, and that witnessed by the initiating seal of *Circumcision, set in the flesh of their children*, must needs stumble at the new Covenant, if it exclude their issue, as hath been before noted : So that the Infant-Baptisme, so clearly witnessing the order of the Covenant, and benefit of relation to beleiving Parents, to the *comfort* of men within the Church, and *encouragement* of men without the Church, it must needs be more profitable than the Baptisme at grown years, which *curtails* the Covenant, *cuts off* posterity, *casts out* of the Church, all *relation natural*, and maketh all ministrations of Grace to be merely *personal*.

The third benefit of Infant-Baptism is That it *enlargeth the bounds, and establisheth the being of the Church of God* ; but the baptisme of grown men doth much confine the borders, and hazard the being of the Church. Infant-Baptism doth enlarge the Church by the spreading of it through whole *Families, Countries* and *Nations* ; persons are private and perishing but posterity is publique and flourishing,

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ing; *holy seed* is the Churches nurserie, whilest *grown trees* are fading; *Lambs* are the increafe of Christs Fold, when *old sheep* are few and dying; and *succession* is the surest title and strongest ground of claim: when from generation to generation the Church of God is continued in a constant Race, from Father to Son, it is much established against hellish opposition. Nature hath made all living Creatures, *seminal* that that they might multiply and continue: the course of providence is the same to the Church that it is to the World: certainly the only wise God well knew the best way to enlarge and establish his own kingdome upon Earth; and he, though he founded his Church in an *old stock*, yet ordered the spreading of it by *natural branches*, and preservation of it by *posterity*: The method of God must needs be the same in the maintenance of his Church under the *new*, as it was under the *old Testament*, and he that takes up his Church from one Nation, on designe to extend it through all the nations of the World, would never plant it only in *personal, perishing plants*; but provide for their scattering an *holy-seed*, for its increafe and succession. The promise of the Churches increafe in Gospel times, it noted to be by *children*; the promise is exprefs, *I will lift up my Standard to the Gentiles, and they shall bring thy sons in their armes, and thy daughters on their shoulders, Isa. 49. 22.* Our own observation must needs witness the the bounds of the Church is much enlarged by *Infant Baptisme*: more are ingaged to God by an early incorporation to his Church, then their own *personal choice*: for where we see one man take up Christianity so much as to the profession of it, on terms of choice,



choice, we see hundreds engaged therein by *parental profession*, and *baptismal obligation* in their infancy ; if an essay hereof were made in *America*, how small would be the number of them that should own God and Christ, by being baptized in grown yeers ; and how numerous would they be, by a timely dedication to God, and incorporation to the Church by *Infant Baptisme* ? And again how many generations, each after other, hath succeeded in the Churches of God in our Nation ; but how soon will they be extinct, this Orchard be overspread with the weeds of Atheism and Heathenism, if Anabaptists Parents do proceed to *break off their branches from the Olive*, and the line of the Covenant from their *Posterity* ?

The fourth benefit of Infant Baptisme, *It exciteth Repentance*. Baptisme in it self is hereunto an argument, but it is more enforced from the season of *Infancy* than grown age ; humiliation for past guilt, and future caution against sin are much enforced by the *season of our Baptisme*, and that by pointing out unto us the *inclination of our nature*, and the *kindnesse of our God*, both which meeting with an ingenuous spirit, are very moving and melting considerations ; That we are *washed in water*, doth witness we are *unclean* ; but in that we are washed in this *Infant season*, before stained with the least actual sin and personal corruption, must needs witness, that *in the day of our nativity our Father was an Amorite, our mother an Hittite : we were polluted in our blood, our navel not cut ; we were not washed, nor salted ; no eye pitied us, but we were cast out to the loathing of our persons*. It Baptisme be an Ordinance of Remission and Regeneration

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ration it must needs remember in its *infant subjects*, that in their nature there is *guilt* to be bewailed and pardoned, a *foreskin* to be violently cut off; a *pravity* unto evil, to be slain; an *old man*, to be crucified with Christ; a *corrupt nature*, to be watched against with all care and caution, and that not acquired by any *personal act or custome* of our own, as Baptisme at age imports; but (the more cutting it is to consider) it is *imbred in nature*, hereditarie to our being, and therefore will easily act in us, more closely adhere to us, and doth call for more care to keep it under: true repentance always reflects on the root of sin, *in iniquity was I conceived, and in sin did my mother bring me forth*, is the first complaint of penfive David, and hereunto Infant-Baptisme doth plainly point us.

This season of our Baptisme, doth not only acquaint us with our own vile nature, but also *affect us with Gods kindnes*, which will melt the ingenuous soul into mourning and much care, not to offend; for the season of our Baptisme doth shew us *Gods love to us*, as he was the God of *our fathers* and the God of *our youth*, and both of them are exceeding aggravations of guilt: God often doth charge the sin of *Israel* under the notion of *forsaking the God of their fathers*; and the pious in Scripture, did much enforce their humiliation, by the kindneses God did shew *their fathers*: And if we consider our selves sealed *in infancy* by Baptisme, we must needs see God was the *God of our fathers*, and struck Covenant with them, and was unto them *gracious*, otherwise we could not have been owned, as *begotten to the Lord* and to be baptized; and therefore the sins we commit,

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is against our fathers, friend and God; nay they are against the God of our youth, that owned us in the day of our nativity, and in the loathing of our persons, and said unto us, Live; that took us as his own, swore unto us, and entred into Covenant with us in our very cradle, when we could not choose for our selves; and set the seal of his Covenant in our flesh, & placed us on the knees of his Church, brought us up at his own cost, and nourished us by his Ordinances, and hath been our God all our dayes: Oh! what aggravations of sin doth this kindness of God afford? How may the Ministers of God speak bitter things against them that dayly break the Covenant of their youth, and deal unfaithfully with the God of their fathers? Me thinks I shou'd hear some pensive soul sitting on its stool of repentance, thus soaking its hard heart in its Infant-baptisme, by such serious contemplations as these. I am baptized: *then surely* unclean; *guilt is on my soul; the body of corruption possesseth me, if I be not pardoned, I perish; if this old man be not buried with Christ in Baptisme I am undone. Must not the water of my baptism, set the pump of my dry heart on running tears of contrition for this defiled estate of my person: of my person. That is not all; I was baptized in infancie; before I was in the least capable of staining my person. Oh wretched man! my very nature is defiled: how can I dream of drawing nigh to God, that am the puddled stream of a polluted fountain? Sin is my natural temper, and guilt the very image of my father: In iniquity I was conceived, and in sin brought forth, how shall I be purged from this natural blemish, or withstand this imbred corruption? How am I necessitated to live in sin, for that it is naturalized to my very being?*

*How*

*How easily must I needs be drawn to sinfull action, whose very nature is sinful corruption? If ever I obtain pardon for, or power over my sin, it must needs be an act of especial Grace, the benefit of a peculiar Covenant: Sure I am, I can never sufficiently lament this sad estate of my nature. Many are the sinfull action which daily flow from this bitter root, and they sink my soul into the depth of sorrows, when I seriously consider myself baptized: For hereby I see God, the God of my fathers, and the God of my youth, to have been the object of my offences, against thee, thee only have I offended; thee, the God of my father, to whom thou shewedst favour, and called him out of darkness into thy marvellous light, with whom thou didst establish thy Covenant of Grace, and didst extend it to his seed; and madest me, miserable me, partakers of it, and so becamest my God from my very being; thou sawest me in the day of my nativity, when I lay in my blood in the loathing of every person, thy eye pitied me, thou said'st unto me, Live; thou spakest kindly unto me, swarest to me, and entred'st into Covenant with me, and madest me thine own; layedst me in the lap of thy Church, nourishedst me by thine Ordinances: Thou by timely engaging me to thy self, didst prevent my wicked choice and Satan his malicious purpose of possessing me as a vassal of his kingdome; all my days thou hast done me good, yet wretched I, have sinned against such a God; ungrateful I, have been ready to forsake thee, my God, and my fathers God, and have dealt falsely in thy Covenant: It might be just with thee, to deal with me as I have dealt with thee, when I despised the oath in breaking the Covenant; but in thy mercy Lord, I pray thee, Remember thy Covenant thou madest to me in the dayes of my youth, and establish*

*stablish it for an everlasting Covenant, that I may know the Lord, that I may remember and be ashamed, and never open my mouth any more, because of my shame, when thou art pacified towards me, for all that I have done against the God my father, and the God of my youth: Now will I live in loyalty to so good a God, if thou wilt give me to be sanctified by the blood of sprinkling, and my old man to be crucified by Baptisme, which by thy Grace shall be the awe of my soul, and answer of my heart unto every temptation to sin against thee.*

This benefit cannot be effected by adult Baptisme, which affords no such matter of meditation, apprehending the dispensations of God to be only personal, and therefore to be personally improved.

The fifth benefit of Infant-Baptisme is, that it *enforceth faith towards God.* Baptisme as a seal of the promise, pledge of love, and sanctifying Ordinance of God, is a ground of faith pleadable in prayer by all its subjects; but receiveth not a little force from the *season* of its application in *infancie*; whilst it self witnesseth the *Covenant* it seals; the season of its use witnesseth the *extent of the Covenant* to *beleevers and their seed*, and creates a ground on which to claim protection, as well by *early seizure*, as *covenant propriety*, not to note how all the Graces of God, in order to salvation and good things of this life, even *all things pertaining to life and godliness*, are assured to the soul by Baptisme, as the seal of the Covenant. The Parent can with faith thus plead from the season, *Lord, my childe is thine in Covenant, to thee begotten to thee dedicated, by thy seal on his flesh, Oh! wilt thou own him: Remember him; take care of him; e-*  
*stablish*

*stablish thy Covenant with him; let all the graces of thy promise be performed to him; let not Satan seduce him from thy service, to which he is so soon sealed: How much do I owe to thee, that maketh grace to run through Natures channel, my loins? Lord, let him in time know, and have faith to claim his interest: keep him from the property of prophane Esau, that he despise not his birth-right in thy Covenant, which thou hast sealed to him in the sight of thy people, by his baptism: And as the Parent for the person baptized, acting faith in the Ordinance, doth thus enforce it from his season of enjoyment of it. God is a gracious God, in calling my parents, he had respect unto my good, before I had a being; he graciously established with them a Covenant, which he extended to their seed; I no sooner sprang from the womb, but he owned me as his own, and called me by his name, and set the seal of his Covenant in my flesh: as studious to forestall the choice of my corrupt will (which would never have chosen him) he challenged me, and caused me to be dedicated to his service; as sensible of Satans malice; he made an early seizure of me, and set his mark upon me, and before there was in me the least of act or qualification, he sanctified me to himself by the washing of water: What ever doubts may deter me, I will now draw nigh unto him, and depend upon him; for he that was so soon gracious in extending and sealing to me the Covenant, will faithfully perform it: My condemnation will be most just, if I, having such grounds of faith, should be cut off by reason of unbelief: now I will walk before, and wait upon him; for he will not now forsake me, or suffer Satan to repossess me, and take me out of his house and family.*



The sixth Benefit of Infant-Baptisme is, That it engageth more to duty, than adult Baptisme. Herein it is of use of to the Parent and baptized child. How much of argument doth Infant-Baptisme press upon the Parent, to the due instruction and education of his baptized child : Not to speak any thing of the benefit of catechising it self, the Parent hath reason to reflect the Baptisme of his child in its infant estate, to convince him, That if God hath been so gracious to extend a Covenant of Salvation to his seed ; he must have so much grace as to make them know Gods goodness ; and understand the extent of the Covenant : If God hath caused their loins to convey grace as well as sin, their care must be that the grace of God be not received in vain : The childs ignorance of interest in conceded honours and priviledges, is the baseness of education, and blot of natural affection : If by their Parental power they have dedicated them to Father, Son, and holy Ghost, it is their part to make them know to what they are devoted. And as it binds the Parents to the duty of education, so the child to carefull observation : Early adoption is the greatest argument of filial observation that can be : the child taken off the Stall, is more bound to the will of Parents, than the man at years adopted to inherit ; the one is the object of more pitie, subject of more care, cost and charge, but of lesse service and obedience ; therefore bound more to duty than the other : Infant Baptism giveth cause to sing with Israel, He is our God and our fathers God, we will exalt him, Exod, 15. 2. and with David I am thy servant, the son of thy handmaid ; I will offer sacrifice and call upon thy name,

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Psal.



*Psal.* 116. 16, 17. We must not think as *heirs* of dignity to wear Gods livery in our cradles; but must know, it makes us also *heirs* of duty, to yeeld loyalty to him all our dayes. Parental dedication to God, layeth on us the duty of observation. Shall Parents proclaim days of *purim* to be observed in all generations, and posterity dare to pretermitt them? Whether we consider *Gods pitie* or our *Parents power* sparkling in our *Infant-Baptism*, both impose on us duty; and the nature of our *Baptism* (the effect of both) binds us to fight at Gods command under Christ his Banner against every iniquity and vice, to the discharge of every duty of Religion; but neither faith nor obedience can be so enforced by the Baptisme of grown persons, which deny relations natural to be of any use in things of Salvation, and doth greatly darken the method and order of the Covenant of Grace and Salvation.

The seventh and last Benefit of Infant-Baptisme is, That it *encourageth under death*; and that either the *Child or Parents*. We read in primitive times of *Infant Martyrs*, certainly they were thereunto prepared by a knowledge of their interest in the Covenant. In vain should the miserable mother encourage the scourged thirsty child, to remember *the Cup of which Isaac drank*, and patiently to bear its present torments, for that it should be shortly crowned with eternal glory: if the child at eight years of age had not understood the Covenant of God, and been *catechized in its baptism*: Our Anabaptists will never afford us *babie Martyrs*, that will not allow us *babie Christians*? And as for Parents, if their childrens interest in

in the Covenant and right to Baptisme, do not support them under the death of their babes, I (a parent of dead children) do demand, what can? That they are by nature *children of wrath*, must not be denied; that they fall into a *limbus Infantum*, must be denied by all that abhor Poperie: that they are saved there remains no hope, whilest we see them out of the Ark of salvation: What unusual way the Anabaptists run upon for their own comfort, they have not yet declared, nor will Scripture warrant any: Were it not for Infants interest in the Covenant, sealed in their Baptism, I should mourn over my dead children, as without hope.

You see now, that there is not only warrant in Scripture for the Baptism of your Infants, but there is much of profit by it. Whilest others are beating the controversie, do you study the practice of Infant-Baptisme. Let not seducers beguile your simple souls, by pretending Infant-Baptism is *unlawfull*, because *unusefull*: But seeing there is so much profit in the Ordinance, and so much in the season of its application, prize it, pursue it, and preserve it to the Church: Let your children be *baptized* in their infancie, and *catechised* according to their growing capacitie, that through ignorance they may not throw away their birth-right, but may duly know the duty and dignity thereof, and demean themselves as baptized souls.

The fifth and last particular direction or exhortation is to Church-gathering saints, *To admit the baptized into the approaches to God, in the assemblies of his*  
Q 2 people

people. Make no bar of division to such as bear the badge of union. If Baptisme do incorporate into the Church, and consecrate unto God, why doe you deny the relation of the *baptized*, or their fitness for divine service? either deny Baptisme to be the *door of admision* into the Church of Christ, or throw down your *Church Covenant, agreement or experiences of graces*, as to entrance into a Church state. Deny Baptisme to be the *Church constituting bond*, or talk not of gathering Churches from among baptized soul: Affect not to your selves the terms and titles of *saints, brethren, belevers, Church*, and the like, whilest those you despise have as good, nay (by reason of your sinful schism) a better title thereunto then your selves. If Baptisme be the ground of confidence in access to God, who are you that make it void? Is not the straitning of the Church door as dangerous as setting it wide open? Will it not be equally provoking to God to let *dogs* into his house, and to *keep children out*; to pollute his *his holy thing* by the unbaptized, and bar the baptized from *his worship*? If men baptized walk disorderly, endeavor by discipline to reduce them deny not their interest: drive them not from God: make it not your designe to paganize the Christians among whom you dwell, that some few of them may, be brought into your Church way: Weigh well the nature of Baptisme, if it do not charge your way with wickednesse, I know not how to judge: If Baptisme rightly apprehended, be not the engine to batter Independencie, I dare renounce my skill in militaries. Let not God say, *draw neer in full assurance, having your bodies washed with pure water*; and you say

say to your Baptized Brethren, *stand thou further from me, I am holier than thou.*

Thus then I have noted to you the *nature of Baptism*, the outward Ordinance, and the *duties that flow from its consecrating nature*; which rightly understood, will convince much error, and correct many sinfull practises: Which that it may doe, God, Father, Son, and holy Ghost, in whose holy Name we are baptized, follow it with his blessing. Amen.

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*Courteous*

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*Courteous Reader these Bookes following,  
are printed for, or to be sold by Dor-  
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FINIS.

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THE

# Hard way to H E A V E N: Explained and applyed in A S E R M O N

Intended to be preached at *Peters-Cornhill*: but by Reason of the disorderly Concourse preached at *St. Katharines Creed-Church London*, the 27<sup>th</sup> of *July* 1662. being the third day after his release.

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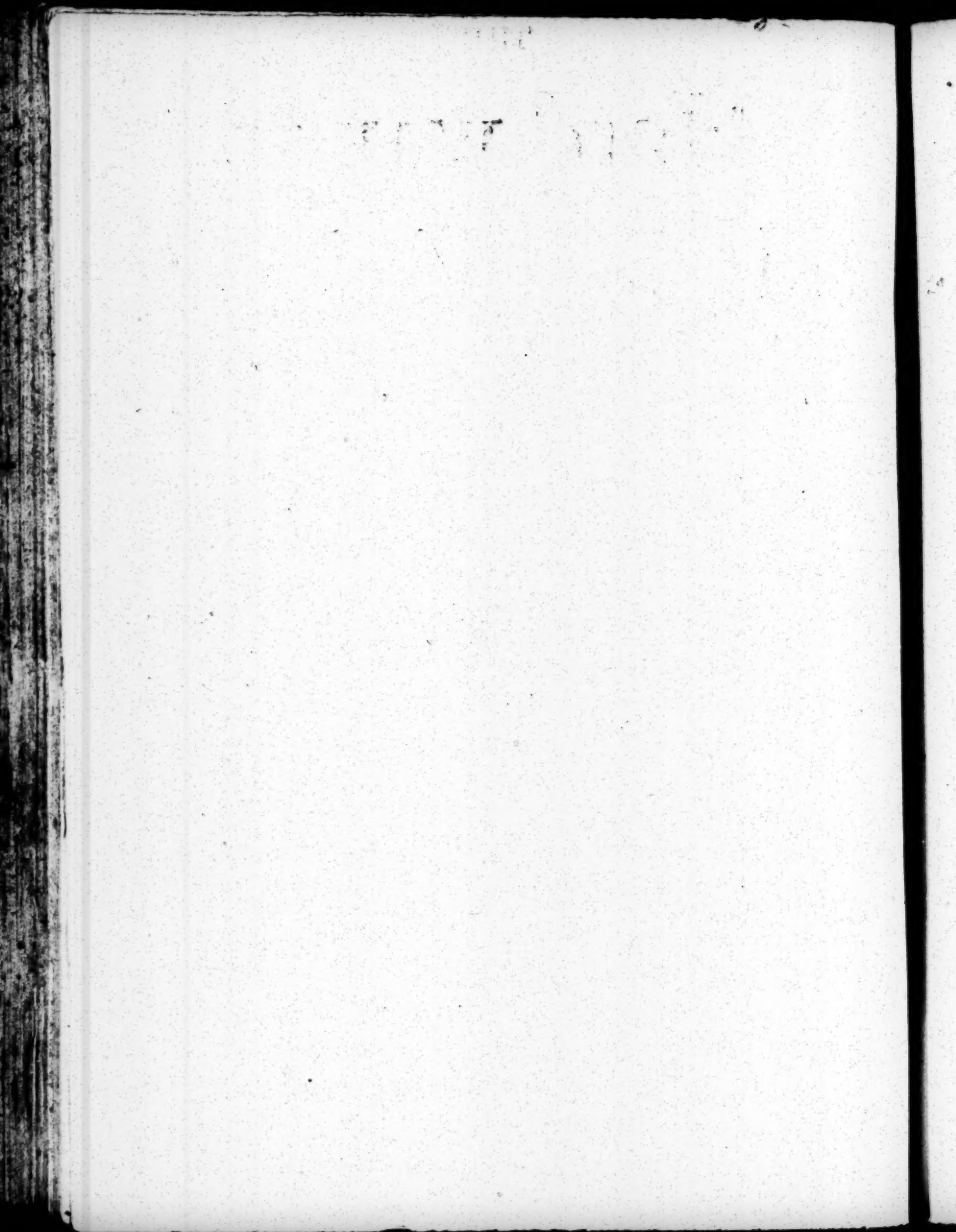
By *Z. CROFTON* Minister at *Buttolphs-Algate*.

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Taken (as Preached) in Characters compared with his own Notes providentially lost and brought to our hands: Now published to check and correct the misrepresentation thereof by the Sons of Slander and Subjects of weakness.

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L O N D O N,  
Printed in the Year, 1662.



# To the Reader.

Good Reader,

**T**He untrue and direct contrary reports of this Sermon, and its Authour, extort the publication thereof. Mr. Crofton will not do it, he contenteth himself in the conscience of his integrity, and accounts it an easie thing to be judged of men; yea of good men; his good name is the Churches advantage, and ought to be preserved and defended against the calumnies of the wicked, and censures of the weak, who wound not him without, more deeply wounding their own souls.

I having written this Sermon from his mouth in short-hand, and (by his Notes lost by his Son, and by Providence directed to my hand) having supplied what time and the disorder of the audience caused him to pretermit: I thought it my duty to hazard the discontent of my friend and Pastour, and to present thee with the same, that by unprejudiced reading thou mayest be undeceived, edified, and enabled to contradict the clamours of the sons of slander, and check the censure of the over-credulous subjects of weakness, though not of Sanctity. Recantation is most strangely expected from him who never yet was charged, or by argumentation was convinced of an error, on whom no terms or conditions for obtainment of Liberty was once imposed, or so much as proposed by any person whatsoever, whose non-conformity was fully, freely, and (to the honour of the honourable Persons before whom he was convened) acceptably declared, and the occasion, yea formality of which is no other then a consciencious practice, and profession of principles he ever stated in his late contests for Reformation.

I wonder to finde some serious Christians scandalized at Mr. Crofton's attendance on Gods solemn publick worship, celebrated according to the order of the Common Prayer Book, and to hear men censure him for the same, as if defe-

### To the Reader.

*elive and an apostate from the cause of Reformation, in which he appeared with so much vigour. I must tell the Reader, such as sate under his ministry cannot but know and witness he ever advised against leparation in his most earnest perswading or endeavours for reformation; he alway dissuaded non-communication of members, as non-conformity of Ministers, and did constantly and convincingly affirm, that ministerial disorder and corrupt appendents in Gods worship was not a sufficient cause of personal absence or non-attendance on the same; he ever concluded guilt on the Church Collective by these disorders and corruptions, which did not stain individuals looking to their own personal aſtings in their necessary attendance on Gods Ordinance: Verily we must say Mr. Crofton in prison did only practise what he preached whilst at liberty.*

*Such was Mr. Croftons care and condition in his late contests for reformation, not to be esteemed an Advocate for separation, or an approver of non-communication (much lesse a Martyr for them) that in his late writing he professeth his judgement and resolution against them.*

*In his Analepsis, or St. Peters bonds abiding, thou hast him thus professing, I protest whatsoever shall be the establishment in the Church, though never so corrupt, whilst consistent with salvation, though it may occasion to me sufferings, and the suspension of my ministry; by Gods grace it shall not effect in me, or such on whom I have influence, Schisme from the Church.*

*In his Analepsis Analephthe, or the fastning of St. Peters bonds, he avoweth, this reformation cannot justify the separation, for that the corruptions established were never made such essential parts of worship, as to make a sufficient ground for separation. The sober, zealous Non-conformists, who groaned under the burden of these corruptions, and for this reformation, were grieved by, and greatly contended against the separation, as that which was without*

### To the Reader.

*sufficient ground, yea like Jesus Christ their Master, they kept communion with a Church, whose doctrine and worship was in much need of reformation, yea, and they taught men so to do.*

*And in his Epistle to Mr. Firmius Liturgical Considerator Considered, in which he apologiseth for Ministers not reading (not for members not learning) the Common Prayer Book, he tells us expressly his judgement and resolution in these express words; I am so much affected to the peace of the Church that I have of late preached what God assisting, I resolve to practise: viz. many and great corruptions in Gods worship are to be grieved for patiently, and groaned under, before Schismes be consented unto, and separation consulted; provided neverthe less I be passive, not active: I can keep communion under that form of worship, whereby I cannot administer and heartily say Amen to the matter of those Petitions which are put up in an order so confused, preposterous, and indigested, that it seemeth to me to be so much below the gravity of the Church, whose mouth I must be, the seriousness of the office whereby I minister, the sanctity of the duty I am to perform, and the sacred nature of the object to whom they are presented, that I dare not stand between God and his people in the same.*

*Let these passages and the like in his late writings be observed, as the best of his Judgement and Conscience, and let malice it self read in his practise the least contradiction to his Cause or Principles, or defection from the same, or not read with half an eye an exact conformity to himself, and clear obedience to his judgement, in a non-conforming communion.*

*Good Reader, be pleased to observe, that Mr. Crofton's attendance on the solemn worship of God in the Tower, and in the Common Prayer Book order, is so far from being the result of his restraint, and effect of temptation, or any condition in order to his release, that his judgement was ever for it: He never did conceive that Order*



### To the Reader.

(though to be corrected) a moral sufficient bar to this duty; and therefore the very first day he came in prisoner, he did desire of the Lieutenant the liberty of going to Church, and not obtaining it, he did demand it the next day from his Gaoler; he did many times petition for the same, and solicited the obtainment thereof many months before he did obtain it: nay I must further acquaint thee, it is now neer upon a compleat year since Mr. Crofton, it being rumored that he went to the Church in the Tower, and he heard Common Prayer, did write a full Apology and defence of his practice (which was then but in the view) in that case; this Apology passed through my hands to many good people and Ministers, who would not undertake to convince the same of error, though they continued to scandalize him and his practice, and hindered the publication of the same.

These things I note unto thee Reader, that thou mayest see Mr. Crofton's practice in this case is not new or rash, but resolved and deliberate; and is so far from defection from, that it is an upright walking according to his apprehensions of the Gospel. Howsoever I could, I will not now dilate in defence of his principles and practice, nor break out to a large and sharp invective against the licentiousness of the tongues, and the lying spirits of seeming Saints so notoriously extravagant against a person so innocent and upright, and therefore exposed to the violence and rage of men on both extremes of Reformation; for hereby I know I should incense him, whose displeasure will be great for doing this, which I could not in peace have left undone.

Let me assure thee, Mr. Crofton's judgement is in Ecclesiasticks the very same it was before his confinement; he then could not, now cannot conform; he then could, now can communicate, and give an Amen to the matter of Prayers, whose order his judgement must and doth condemn: He was then, is now zealous for reformation, and against separation: He then resolved, and now resolveth, to seek Church purity by union with the Church, and to abide in the house; he endeavoureth to cleanse, to bring his offerings unto the Lord, when  
that

To the Reader.

that his soul doth loath them by reason of the prophane hands and preposterous order, in which the sons of Eli do present them.

I know it to be his burden to observe the bastard brood of non-communicating separating Sects, taken as vagrants, and whipt home to their reputed parents, to lie at the door and lurk under the wings of reforming non-Conformists, who did ever disown them, and drive them out as not theirs, but destructive to their honest design. I know Mr. Crofton to be zealous lest the policy of some, and weakness of others should so far embrace these, as to make spectators think them their natural Children. I know Mr. Crofton is sensible many are ~~averse~~ to him in negatives, against prophaneſs, against superstition, against corruption, against disorder; but are his ~~disturbers~~ in positives for no order, for no communion, for no Church. I am sure Mr. Crofton hath sadly resented that scandal under which Non-conformity groans, and is made odious, viz. It is a spirit of contradiction against every thing, but for nothing. Mr. Crofton well knoweth those who clamour against his communion, make Church entity, not Church purity, their quarrell and controversie: He hath observed their Church gathering commenced and proceeded under the endeavours of Reformation, and unto the supplanting and subversion thereof. Mr. Crofton is convinced, that Christs true Church, though corrupt, and Christs own Ordinances, though disorderly administred, are to be embraced, adheared unto, and attended, when the flocks of Christs companions are to be avoided. I am confident Mr. Crofton is resolved to follow his Lord when come from the flock to the threshold of the Temple, but he dareth not go before him. Reader, if this be an error, help Mr. Crofton to conviction, and then thou mayest hear his recantation; in the mean time joyn with me in prayer, that God will give repentance to the men who have called good evil, and evil good, and uncharitably represented a consciencious practice, of well considered, openly declared, deliberately resolved principles, to be an apostacie, defection, recantation,

To the Reader.

recantation, back-sliding, base complying, and conformity.

The Lord encrease the number of such Apostates who will by preaching, writing, and practice, under the reproach and rage of all men, shew their endeavours of reformation, in that strait gate and narrow way of careful, industrious, non-conforming communion with the Church in Christs Ordinances, between those rocks which on each hand work its ruine: This is the hearty desire and prayer of

August 9.  
1662.

Thine in and for the simplicity  
of the Gospel.

H. M.

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THE

# Hard way to Heaven.

EXPLAINED & APPLIED.

*In a Sermon Preached on the 27 of July 1662.*

The Text *Matthew 7. 14.*

*Because strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way, which leadeth unto life.*

I cannot but conceive many in this audience (acted more by curiosity then Christianity) come with an expectation, that I will declare and discourse the things of my self, or Gods dealings with me in my late condition: But I must let you know, I must herein disappoint you; Experiences of this nature is my own Comfort; what was to me in common with other Christians, I shall declare to your edification; and that is in generall, *the serious reflections of my thoughts under the Straits of my late condition*, concerning which I may say as that eminent Martyr of our reformed Religion, *John Philpot*, said in the like case, *in the Lollards Tower passing through six or seven doors, I came to my Lodging through many Straits, where I called to remembrance, Strait is the Gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto Life; The strait passages which lead to glory, ought to be always pondered, but the thoughts thereof are most proper, and profitable when we are locked up in them, and the silence thereof by a necessity of suffering what we cannot escape without sin; the Heathen accounted it their honour to represent virtue to be a Strait and narrow way, and therefore it self the reward of all industry in and for it; sure I am it is the Glory of Christianity, that it was never Propounded to the world as an estate of ease: Christ was never Preached without his Cross, nor was Heavens*

Glory ever declared without a determination of hardship in the attainment thereof: *Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life*, is the Doctrine Preached by the Lord himselfe, and the truth thereof is dayly proved by the experience of his Disciples.

These words are part of our Saviours Sermon preached in the Mountain, in which many particular Doctrines and special duties, were by him Stated, and directed: whether this Sermon was a set Solemn and Continued discourse, of the Preacher (as by its Circumstance it seemeth to have been, or the Evangelists Collection, and composition of those many passages, and particular discourses which passed from our Saviour on severall occasions, at sundry times (as Calvin doth conceive) I shall not now stand to enquire or debate.

In the foregoing verse our Saviour perswadeth his hearers to an hard Task, *Enter in at the Strait gate*; and enforceth his exhortation with, and by a disparity of the different paths in which men passe unto different ends: *For wide is the Gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat: because strait is the Gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be who find it*: the one is easie and undoing, the other is hard and happy.

The Doctrine.

Our Text is the second and Counterpart, of our Saviours reason, (viz.) that way which is hard in its passage, but happy in its end; And it is in its self an entire proposition, and so shall stand for our point of Doctrine, which we shall prosecute by way of explication, and application. *Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the way to life*. First by way of Explication.

The Doctrine explained.

I will not spend time in noting to you the many Readings and versions of this proposition, only observe the ancient Copies to read the same as a proposition of admiration. *How strait is the Gate! How narrow is the way which leadeth unto life!* but this being an Emphasis in! no hindrance of its argumentation it giveth no cause of controversy.

This proposition falleth into two parts to be particularly explained.

The Subject.

1. The Subject or thing spoken of *The gate and way to life*.  
2. The predicate, or thing spoken of it, *It is strait and narrow*.  
Of these in order, and first of the Subject, or thing spoken of, and



and therein we have two things also observable.

1. The End, Life;

7h. end  
of a bri-  
lian. fl. &c.

2 The means under this Metaphor, a *Gate*, a *way*, *life* is that end, and estate which is to be aimed at, and driven unto by the *Gate and way*, which our Lord Jesus Christ doth advise and direct, this is the marke all must strive to hit, the prize of our high Callings; All must press to possess; for this, left by shooting short or wide, doth utterly undo us, and sinck us in perdition: *May it is Life* an undoubted Blessings, a most eminent Blessing, the Emphasis, the Entirety of all blessings, peace, plenty, honour, and dignity, are meer nullities to dead men; a Worm is as much as a Crown to a man in the grave; he who is not, cannot be rich or honourable; whatever be mans estate, he is only happy by *being*; take away his life, and you take his all, *life* is the chief of blessings; to be pursued with utmost Diligence preserved with utmost Care, and purchased at the dearest rate, *All that a man hath he will give for his life*: The Devil well knew the worth of this Jewel, when he durst presume to put at *Jobs* to pawn his conscience & Integrity: the insensible eternity of his life, to the securing of a present transient puff thereof: But the life in my Text is more than a bare naked life, it is the *life* which is in the right hand of wisdom, which comprehendeth all goodness, real good; this is not a *natural life*, though that is to be preserved and prized; yet for the securing of this life, it is to be parted from and lost; of, & in this sense, our Saviour hath determined *he who will save his life must lose it*: The natural life capacitateth to the enjoyment of the good things of God, but this life gives us the enjoyment of our good God himselfe: this life is not the *spiritual life*; I do not mean in respect of its *nature and quality*, for so it is spiritual; but I mean, it is not such in respect of degree, and operation, whereby the life of Grace (the same in kind) is distinguished, as different from the life of Glory: this life giveth us a Converse with God, remote, and at a distance, subject to weakness and imperfection, and many heat chilling, almost heart killing interpositions; and cloudy dispensations: But the life in our Text gives us the enjoyment of God immediately *in his presence*: fully in himselfe: perfectly, seeing him and knowing him, as seen and known of him, and eternally without parting from him, or his parting from us; this is the River of Life, which runneth in the City of God: into Rivers of pleasure in his presence for evermore: it is

Job. 26

Prov 3. 16.  
8. 35.

Not natu-  
rall life.

Math. 26.  
25.

Not spiri-  
tuall life.

but eternall  
life.

1 Cor. 13.  
12.

Rev. 1. 22.



therefore that which Christians in Scripture-language call the *life of God, the life of Christ, the life of Glory, Life everlasting*. It abideth after the natural life is expired; it aboundeth beyond what the spiritual life (as distinct from this life) doth or can extend unto. This life is the Emphasis, the excellency of Eternity, it being thereof the subject. Eternity simply and in the abstract, is an amazing dismaying property; a soul that sitteth, or walketh in the vale of the shadow of death, and casteth his eye on the black, boundless, bottomless Ocean of Eternity, findeth the same to reflect, affrighting dreadful apprehensions on his soul; which are appeased and made comfortable by onely discerning eternity is the adjunct unto nature: Men cannot without dread and terror shoot the Gulph of natural death, because thereby they pass into eternity; it is the assurance of life in eternity, which encourageth the soul in so sad passage, and this life eternal is the City, end, estate, unto which the Gate and way in our Text doth lead.

The  
means to  
life.

The means conducing to this end is by a Metaphor called and compared to a Gate, to a way, and as such it doth represent unto our serious observation, the *nature, the order, and the number* of that means which doth effect, or by which men must work out their own Salvation.

its nature.

First, this Metaphor doth note unto us the *nature of the means of Grace*, which tends unto Glory: It is a *Gate*; and a *way*: a Gate, a way, are places of personal motions under special prescription, and limitation unto some peculiar place or end: and these places are denominated Gates and Ways in relation to their termination; and the necessity of mens motion in them: a Gate: as that close passage, by which if men do not enter, they can no way move in the *Way*, or *Street* which leadeth further. The way, is that narrow bounded passage, by, or in which men can onely move in safety, unto the place at which they would arrive, if they step out of these bounds they are trespassers and in danger, and therefore by their personal motion, under these prescriptions, they can only arrive at their desired places: this then doth teach us. The means which must effect eternal life, is *mans personal motion, and activity under Gods prescriptions, directions, and limitations*; these are the paths of peace, the way of wisdom, and the Gates of righteousness, the termination must be from God, but the motion must be from man, the Lord doth set, but man must keep within these bounds, direction is divine observation

Prov: 3.  
19. 4. 11.  
Plal. 118.  
19. 20.

must be humane; every man who will get Heaven, must go to Heaven in Gods way: he who will win God, must walke with God, according to the will of Cod. *He that will wear the Crown of righteousness must run the race of righteousness,* eternal life cannot be obtained by humane invention, nor without humane motion, or industry, they will equally miscarry, who stand still in, or strike out of the way, which God directeth, and hath determined: *Israel could never have possessed Laish though the Gates stood open, if they had stood still, and not advanced towards it.* Heaven is not the event of idleness, but of activity: when the Lord hath once bounded, determined, directed the Gate: the way of life must move in it with all care and constancy, diligence, endeavour, industry is required from men for the effecting of their Salvation; They are called upon to fight, strive, and wrestle, run, press, proceed, in Gods Commandements: to work out their own Salvation: I could never yet understand or approve the mute, non moving Religion of such *Quakers* who pretend most to Gods Guidance. Miserable are the desires and hopes of life, which strive not unto the attainment and security thereof; vain are the professions of God, which provoke not motion towards God, such who call Christ, Lord, Lord, hear him, and assent to the truth of what he speaketh, but will not do what he saith, will find the Gate of life shut against them when they would but cannot have admittance; not every one who saith Lord, Lord, but he who doth the will of my Father, are in the Gate, the way, and shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, saith our Saviour in this very Sermon, and shortly after this very Text: God hath determined his worship, declared his will; appointed his Ordinances, Men therefore must with all care, caution, constancy and diligence, attend, observe, and do the same, the Gate, the way to life is mans activity in faith and obedience: mans labour in word and Sacraments, Mans industry to do the several duties of his general and particular Calling; having known the will of God, we must up and be doing, having seen the way of righteousness, we must stretch our Limbs, and actively strive and press forward in it, though man is Passive in receiving the first Principles of Grace, and all subsequent strength to duty, he must be an Agent in the pursuit of Glory. I never could believe man had of himselfe *free will to good*; nor that man could ever enjoy God, without doing good, with the force of a free will: God may turn our faces towards Zion, but we must go thither on our own legs,

Gen. 17.  
C. l. 1. 10.

Heb. 12. 1.

Judg. 18.

1 Tim. 9.

12.

Luke 13.

24.

1 Cor. 9.

24.

Phil. 3.

14. 2. 12.

ver. 12.

- Psal. 84. 7.* they go from strength to strength every one in Z'ion until they appear be-  
fore God: Christ Iesus may first apprehend us but we must follow af-  
ter reach, forth unto those things which are before us, press forward  
*Phil. 3. 12.* that we may apprehend that for which we are apprehended of him; the  
springs may enforce, but the wheels themselves move in the  
clock, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; But we must pray, be-  
lieve, &c. It is Christ who strengthneth us; but content in all con-  
ditions, knowledge how to want and abound, patience under  
provoking afflictions, must be our own act: Salvation is Gods  
gift, but we must seek it, and receive it like our selves, by se-  
rious, studious, zealous, constant motion in the way of Gods  
commandements: he that sits still when he sees his way, shall ne-  
ver come to his journeys end; the natural language of saving  
conviction, is, *what shall we do.* Be assured (Christians) they  
*Acts. 2. 37.* who enter not the Gate, move not in the way, get not unto life;  
Be ye therefore not slothful but followers of them, who through faith  
*Heb. 9. 11.* unto duty, and patience) in difficulty inherit the promise.

*11.* Secondly, in this Metaphor we may observe as the nature, so  
its order. The order of the means which leadeth unto life: it is a Gate, a way, first  
a Gate, then a Way, mens motion unto entrance, and after pro-  
gress in the way of Gods prescription, and limitation: God is a  
God of order; nor must we think him more regular in humane  
society, the things of the world, then in the Affairs which con-  
cern his own Glory, and his peoples Salvation; they who act pre-  
posterously in the things which concern men, do reproach their  
maker, and they who act preposterously in the things  
which concern God, reproach their Redeemer, nature and  
necessity doth make a Gate of entrance, proceed the way  
of progress. to any propounded end: Incubation must be  
before process: though there is in some sense and cases an en-  
trance without progress in the ways of God, there cannot possible  
be a progress without entrance: many may indeed begin in the  
point, but end in the flesh: run well in the first acts, but be hin-  
dered in the course of Christianity: after they have known the  
way of righteousness, and escaped the pollutions which are in  
the world through lust, they may be again entangled therein, and  
overcome and turn from the holy Commandement: some who are not  
far from the Kingdom of Heaven, may fall short of it: and some  
who are a most, may never be altogether Christians, but none can  
walk in him, who have not first received Christ the Lord: none  
can be edified, who are not entered into the most holy Faith;  
the

the Scriptures, and Ordinances of God, do represent unto us <sup>Psalm 119.</sup> the Gate before the way of Glory: the entrance of the word of <sup>130.</sup> God which doth make wise the simple, the first principles of the <sup>Heb. 6. 1.</sup> Oracles of God, the foundations of faith, the first Conception and forming Christ in the soul; the Sacraments of God are suited to this order. Baptism is a seal of an Imitation to the Church, engraving into Christ, Incorporation to the Saints: The Lords supper is a Sacrament of growth and continuance in Christ of progress in the way of faith, and true Religion and such as move not in this order, cannot possibly pass unto eternal life: It is in Grace and Religion, as in nature, and secular affairs, and in both: It is all one, not to undertake an enterprize, or to invert the order of motion, necessary to any end: They that enter not the Gate, may move and go forward, but not into the City: they who lay not the foundation, may form a frame, but cannot build any standing structure: such who secure not their Birth, and are not rooted in Christ, cannot grow up in him: It is with many preposterous Christians, as with rash giddy Coucellors, who dispossess the Conquest, and divide the Bears skin, before they consult the war-fare, or go out to kill the Bear, or like wandring beggars, who being in constant motion, neither know nor care whither they go, so they have but an house in their eye: so many having heard of Heaven, and Holiness wander with a blind affection any ways, in which they may keep that within sight: but never consider whether they have entred the Gate of this Enclosure: Let me tell you, many will prove this destructive to them, that they take a view of the dignities, without any care of the duties of a Christian, and grow great and strong in the joys, confidence, and expectations of Saints who are strangers, yea enemies to the principles and practises of piety; to the fundamental doctrines of faith, and ordinances of worship; I have with amazement observed deluded souls, to have passed from some gross prophaneity, Idolatry, and Superstitions, and to wander in by paths, with the greatest security, alacrity, confidence, joy, professing (to the Blasphemy of the Gospel, Shame of Martyrs, and Scandal of Religion) the fullest assurance of their interest in, and approach unto eternal life, that is imaginable: and this not only under the greatest sufferings, but also the most grosse errors, and grievous sins, prid perfidie, perjury, schismes, seditions, treasons, and rebellions; which were even perpetrated

Heb. 6.4; ted under the Sun; and what is more with an heaven daring  
 boldnesse, affirming their abominations to be the cause of God;  
 I could never conceive other cause thereof then this, they having  
 gotten a sight of heaven, tasted the good word of God, and pow-  
 ers of the world to come: giddily to run out without any consi-  
 deration of the Gate, care of entrance, regard unto the *Foundation*  
 knowledge of, *First principals of Religion*; but with a blind affecti-  
 on, move forward in any estate? and it is possible to move toward  
 it, and not come into it, to kee it in sight, in a way which lead-  
 eth not into it, they deceive themselves, defend all their errors  
 and Impieties, and will not hear of a deviation, becaute *Heaven*  
*is in their Eye*, Life is within their view, glory as in their intenti-  
 on; as it *Balaam* were sure to dye, the Death of the Righteous,  
 when and becaute he and all his confessions, and endeavours  
 to curse *Israel* saw their glory and the good will of God unto  
 them: Beloved friends consider mens Estate is *Conver-*  
*ted*, or *unconverted*, as to God, Christ, and true Religion, the  
*unconverted* must make sure they enter the Gate, the strait Gate  
 learn Principles of faith, lay in their Souls the Foundations of,  
 Religion: the *Converted* must with care and caution move in the  
 Narrow way without deviation, or diversion without going a-  
 side or going back: If you have not rightly entered talk what you  
 will, I cannot but suspect your attainments in grace; many of  
 you talk of Religion, and seem to be zealous for it, forward in it  
 whose confused notions, deluded apprehensions, and deviating  
 Conversations, do witness you have not entered the Gate, or at  
 least, and best are gone aside from the way that leadeth to life: Look to  
 Job. 18.4. Gods order, if ever you will live with God in honour, whatever  
 Religions humour may act you to invite Gods order, you must  
 know the Earth must not be removed for you; if you will not ex-  
 actly minde Gods method, you must and will miscarry in your  
 2 Pet. 1.2. designs, and intentions for his life and glory, for sad is their  
 10 21, 22. estate who profess to persue, and yet never enter the pathes of  
 23. peace, and more sad is theirs who entered into the way of Righte-  
 ousnesse, turne aside from the holy Comandements.

The num- The third thing which lieth in this Metaphor is the number  
 ber of the of the means of Grace. It is a Gate a way, singular, not plurall, one,  
 means. not more not many much of the difficulty in the souls passage to  
 life, would be discharged by the multiplicity of pathes: the dan-  
 ger incident to the one, would be avoided by entrance into ano-  
 ther



other: whatsoever be the many special acts of holiness, the Gate of righteousness is, and can be but *one*. The means whereby to get eternal life is *one* and but *one*: in its general nature, it is special, it is singular: you may observe they are predicated by unites, *one* God, *one* Lord, *one* Faith, *one* Baptisme, *one* Body, and *one* Spirit, and indeed the speciality of it is fixed in *one* Person, the Lord Jesus Christ who sayeth of himself *I am the Way*: and well sayeth the Apostle Paul, *Christ is not divided*; Christ may be differently dispensed by doctrines of Faith, different ordinances for worship and directions unto duty, differently exhibited in his different natures, God, Man, Offices, Prophet, Priest and King, or different Acts of Mediatorship, as his Incarnation, Converse among men, observation of the Law, death, resurrection, Ascension, and intercession, or differently administered, that is, made known, and exhibited by different Ministers in respect of their Kinde, Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, or in respect of the different individual Persons under any kind, as Paul, Apollo, Cephas, and the like; but in these, all these, or any of these, *Christ is not divided*; he is and must remain whole and entire, the one, only way to life; These things of Christ may be *dissantiae*, they are not, they cannot be *opposita*, for they then would be inconsistent, destructive each to other: *A Kingdom divided against it self cannot stand*, Christ divided doth cease to be: they that embrace not Christ under all his exhibited acts and Offices, under all his dispensed Ordinances, Doctrines and directions, in all and every of his Ministers, enter not the Gate, walk not in the way to eternal life: nor are these in any contrary wayes, but the same one individual way existing in so many distinct, and different steps: such who dream of many, not onely different, but directly contrary wayes to Heaven, do and will deceive themselves and others: For that Gate and Way which admitteth no *Tergiversation*: nor regresse, no diversion, deviation or stepping aside on either the right or left hand, and is the same to all and every Traveller, can be but one: to *divide in the way* is ordinarily incident to Saints: but to *divide the way* is inconsistent with salvation: I have often admired, and must confesse I cannot understand that monstrous charity of our Age, that men should turn backs in doctrines of faith and Acts of Worship, and yet shake hands with a friendly confidence of meeting one another in Heaven: to



constitute contrary Churches, consecrate a contrary Ministry, and so create a contrary worship in the forme (and *Forma dat essentiam*,) though the matter be Gods, and yet expect that men should know them as *Saints*, and call them *Heirs of Salvation*, and conclude them in the Way to heaven, is as much as if men should conclude the ten Tribes, with their new priests worshipping God according to the Law of *Moses*, in their new planted Churches at *Dan*, and *Bethell*, were equally related to, interested in, and accepted by God as was *Judah*, and those that feared the Lord, and fled from this new contrary course of Religion, though for matter Gods own institution: I am sure the Apostle was a stranger to this Charity, when he concluded of the Separating Sects in his time, dividing in doctrine, and from the Communion of the Church; that they held not the head, by which the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. I do not deny but *Joseph's* brethren may too unnaturally strive in the way to their Father: but if any of them start from or turne out of the way, they are not like to see him. *Schismes* I grant may be in the Church, and they are sinfull and sad, but *Schismes from the Church* are immediately subverting to Salvation: unfitting contentions may arise between *Paul* and *Barnabat*, unto an undue heat, concerning Society with a defective brother, insomuch that they may part asunder, the one passing to *Cyprus* the other to *Cilicia*, and yet both may meet in Heaven: But *Barnabas* and *Peters* Contrariety to the course of Christianity in a slavish compliance with the Circumcision, is to be contradicted by a zealous *Paul* as destructive to salvation: I misstood him to the face, for he was to be blamed because he walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel. *Hooper* & *Ridley* may with too much heat expostulate the retaining Popish rites & Ceremonies appendant to Religion in the reformed Church & yet agree in the strait and fiery passage to heaven. But *Saunders* cannot in charity hope in heaven to meet *Pendleton* turning back upon the Truth, or *Grinwald* who would not pledge him in the Cup of his Martyrdom for the truth of the Gospel: I desire to have Charity towards all men, but Charity must operate in due & proper Acts, according to the quality of the Object, the charity which commendeth countenanceth & concludeth certainty of life unto the many wanderers out of heavens way, in the by-paths of their own fancy and humour, unto the contradiction of the Truth, and cast-

Coll. 2. on of the Church; that they held not the head, by which the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. I do not deny but *Joseph's* brethren may too unnaturally strive in the way to their Father: but if any of them start from or turne out of the way, they are not like to see him. *Schismes* I grant may be in the Church, and they are sinfull and sad, but *Schismes from the Church* are immediately subverting to Salvation: unfitting contentions may arise between *Paul* and *Barnabat*, unto an undue heat, concerning Society with a defective brother, insomuch that they may part asunder, the one passing to *Cyprus* the other to *Cilicia*, and yet both may meet in Heaven: But *Barnabas* and *Peters* Contrariety to the course of Christianity in a slavish compliance with the Circumcision, is to be contradicted by a zealous *Paul* as destructive to salvation: I misstood him to the face, for he was to be blamed because he walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel. *Hooper* & *Ridley* may with too much heat expostulate the retaining Popish rites & Ceremonies appendant to Religion in the reformed Church & yet agree in the strait and fiery passage to heaven. But *Saunders* cannot in charity hope in heaven to meet *Pendleton* turning back upon the Truth, or *Grinwald* who would not pledge him in the Cup of his Martyrdom for the truth of the Gospel: I desire to have Charity towards all men, but Charity must operate in due & proper Acts, according to the quality of the Object, the charity which commendeth countenanceth & concludeth certainty of life unto the many wanderers out of heavens way, in the by-paths of their own fancy and humour, unto the contradiction of the Truth, and cast-

29.

Acts. 15.  
39.

Gal. 2. 11  
12, 13, 14.

casting off Gods Ordinances, and Gospell ministry; and cutting themselves off from the communion of the Church, is a foolish pitty, inconsistent with the knowledge of Gods order for mans salvation: such as make many and contrary wayes to Heaven, may make a noise and professions of holiness in the world, but will in the end find themselves mistaken and others by them misguided unto the losse of eternall life, unto which there is but a Gate, a Way, one single Gate, and Strait way, not to be declined: It is indeed true, the heavenly City is said to have twelve Gates, but we must observe this City is the end, not Gate of the Christians journey. The City of life, to which the narrow way doth lead, and the multiplicity of these Gates, are Metaphorically mentioned to amplify the Glory thereof: Mans dignity is ample, and abundant, free and full; but mans duty is anxious and afflicted, strait and narrow; all that enter into the City with 12. open gates, must enter at the one Strait gate; and travell in the one Narrow way, which leadeth thereunto: such as walk at large in sight of Heaven will find themselves locked out of this glorious palace, when their past professions of Christ will make them think it hard.

I have done with the Subject or thing spoken of (*viz.*) the means of mans Salvation, the Gate, the way to life: I must now passe unto the Predicate or thing spoken of this Gate and Way, and that is, it is Strait and narrow. The predicate.

This predicate doth declare the property of the passage unto Glory: it is strait & narrow or as some, strait & low: close & little, as others, or serious, & sorrowful: say others it is a Metaphor made use of, to make known the Difficulty, & Danger which doth attend Travellers in the Way to life & happiness, as a strait Gate cannot be entered with ease nor without stooping, and many times Stripping a mans self of all things superfluous, and many times many things necessary; nor can men walk in a narrow way with any great pleasure or freedom, no not without striving and pressing many times, to the pinching of their bodies and perplexing their mind how to pass forward, and make their way through unto the attainment of the desired end, and an arrivall at their intended places of life, and rest: such is mans estate in the use of the means of Grace for the obtainment of Glory, in his entrance into and walking in Christ Jesus our Lord: Heaven is not had with so much ease as most men imagine, and the light negligent carriage of too many

Christians gives men cause to think. Religion is not a business of such facility to follow and maintain, as many dream and suppose; a Christians Conversation is not so smooth and current as many do conceive: Oh no: the Gate of righteousness is more *strait*, the way of holiness is more *narrow*: such who will enter it must strip themselves of all superfluities of sin, and worldly substance; they must cast off the works of darkness, and all that sin

Heb. 12. 1. which compasseth the *n about*, and cast abroad their worldly comforts being ready to distribute, willing to communicate, selling that which they have to give unto the poor: sometimes the passage may be so strait, that they must strip themselves of their very necessities, Lands, Livings, Friends, Houses, Brethren, Sisters, Wife, Children, and Life it self (without which they cannot praise God, nor press in the way to life.) Lying dead in the way by pressing for motion, and progress in the course of Christianity, is many times the event of the Saints labour, and their actual formal entrance into the City of life: nor doth the *straitness* of this gate, or *narrowness* of this way, call for, and more necessitate the soul to be thus *stripped*, then that when thus, it do also *stop*, bow down, bend unto the very dust, and creep on its very belly: the will must be subdued unto, resigned up to Gods will, in doing, in suffering: *Thy will be done* is the Childes only cry; and in heavens way we must become Children, little Children: Mans reason must be resigned up to *divine Revelation*: The wicked man must forsake his own thoughts, as well as the unrighteous man his ways: Natures proud heart must stoop to the Prophets counsel, and wash in *Jordan*, or he must not lose his Leprosie: Gods Word must cast down every *imagination*, and every *high thing which exalteth it self against the knowledge of God*, and bring into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ. Whosoever will walk with God, must walk *humbly with God*; Christians in heavens way must like Christ, *stop at Gods will* under the rage of men, bow down under the fury of the Oppressor, and let the wicked passe over them: they must sometimes give their back to the smiters, and their cheeks to them who pluck off the hair: they must not hide their face from shame and spitting; they must in many perplexities passe into the possession of Life and Glory: Heavens way is not high enough for sinfull man to stand upright in: they must proceed with pain and grief, affliction, and anxiety: for *strait* is

1 Tim. 6. 17, 18, 19.

Isai. 55. 7.

2 Cor. 10. 5.

Isai. 50. 6.

is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life.

This Gate is said to be strait, and this way narrow, in many respects, or for many reasons, which the learned do observe upon this Text: as because it is *repugnant to mans reason, distasteful to mans lust, and affections, attended with distress, great and many afflictions*: every of these reasons are true, and good demonstrations of the difficulty of mans salvation: but I shall not insist upon them, but propose to your consideration one which is more proper, and is most specially intended in the Text.

Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way to life, for it is *terminated, limited, bounded, and restrained*; this gate and way is an *Enclosure*, on each side of which are *Bounds* which cannot be broken without danger; there are *Limitations* which cannot be left in safety: and this is the reason of all that difficulty and danger, anguish, affliction, to which men are exposed, because they must walk, move forward within such *strait bounds*, and *narrow Limits*, and may not, cannot with any safety turn back, or turn aside, when once entered into this strait gate and narrow way.

Mans invention is indeed a large Field, and common Road; but Gods will is a *strait gate and narrow way*: that once revealed, man is by and to it restrained, and may not turn aside from it unto the right hand, or to the left: mans passage towards heaven is like unto the passage into a prison, or rather a Palace, where the entertainment is by a low, little Wicket, to which men must stoop, and in which they cannot enter with anything superfluous: and the progress is over a narrow Bridge open on both sides, on which if a man do not move with caution and circumspection, and tread with even steps, he will tumble into the ditch; one wry step may prove his ruine. *Holiness* is like *Jonathan's* motion to kill the *Philistines* upon an high rock, by a narrow path, on each side of which is a precipice, and in which they cannot go, but must creep on their hands and knees: *Godliness* is a most regular militation, in which the Soldiers are kept close to order, commission, and instructions, not to move one foot without or beyond the same. *Marscallo* the French General

first Knighted a Scotch Soldier for an eminent service he had done, and then beheaded him, for doing it *without Commission*; and the same God who blessed the house of Obed-Edom for entertaining the Arke, made a *Perex Uzza* for *Vzza's* presuming irregularity to uphold it when shaken in the Cart, and in danger to fall; sincerity in Sanctity is a most strait line in which no part is crooked; an upright man goeth right forward in Gods way, without bending on either hand; Christianity is a clear Criticisms; true Religion is reduced to a narrow point; these are on both hands beset with sin; good is the Councell of Wisdome, *turne not to the right or left hand, remove thy foot from evil, Pro. 4. 2*. What the heathen conclude of mo all virtue, is most true of Christian Graces; (*in medio consistit virtus*) true virtue is the narrow middle way, the extreame of which in defect or excelsse are manifest and notorious vice: It is all one in nature to shoot short, or wide of the mark; to be dashed on *Sylla* or *Charybdis*, to loose Salvation by prophane-  
 nelle, or superstitions; to subvert the faith, by ignorance or error; to root up the Church by persecution or seperation; to destroy Godsworship by Irreligion or innovation; to waik evenly, to sail steadily between those extreame, and works which are on each hand, *hic labor, hoc opus*, is an hard piece of work, which will cause much care, charge and pains.

I cannot but observe the Scripture Record doth represent the Saints integrity to have been proved, and approved by an exact obedience in some narrow Crisis, special Act, and particular point, in which they were most closely Pinched: The whole Law was too large a field for mans obedience in innocency; his willing subjection to the soveraign power of his Creator, must be proved by the pinch of *one forbidden tree*, whilst all in their first creation were appointed, and all others were left common, and free unto his use. *Noah* must be the Preacher of righteousness by preparing the Arke (an improbable instrument to save him, when the floods should overwhelm Houses, and mountains;) *Abraham* may follow God he knows not whether, but must be approved the Father of the faithful, by *hoping above hope*, unto the sacrificing of his son *Isaac*: we have heard of the patience of *Job*, which is onely remarkable in one point, he charged not God for his ill; we have also heard of the passions of *Job*, he cursed the day of his birth, but he *curst not his God*; he challenged, but he charged not the Lord! *Dauids faith* was approved by his loyalty, his enemies



mies head was in his hand, when his heart smote him for cutting off the Lap of his garment; what shall I tell you of *Moses*, of *Jeremiab*, of *Daniel*, of the three Children, of the whole cloud of witnesses, whose faith is found sincere by a single point of obedience, *Heb. 11*: Christianity is a most narrow Crisis, and must be well and warily discerned; I cannot but wonder to hear some men when convincingly pinched by a distinct discovery of their deviation from truth, and piety, cry out against *distinctions* as Antichristian and impious: tell them they must discern between Churches, Ministers, Baptismes; for these contradictions, or contrary Constitutions cannot be Christian, and carry to heaven; they will cast off all possibility of conviction by crying out against *logickall distinctions in matters of Religion*; I must tell such, in no case doth that Rule (*Qui bene distinguit, bene docet*) distinction is mans direction, hold good so much as in the case of Religion and Salvation, which is many times won or lost, upon a nice and narrow point, *eating or not eating an Apple, butchering or not butchering an only Son*: such who pretend to move in heavens way without *distinction*, march with confidence, and security to destruction; distinction is the *ratio formalis* of the strait gate, and narrow way; no difficulty, no danger, in a way, which needeth no distinction; saving Grace is a *discerning Spirit*; the spiritual man is a *discerner of the things of God*; *distinction* is the onely demonstration of sincerity, and soundness in the faith; Heresies must come, that they who are sound may be made manifest; my sheep know *1 Cor. 12. 19.* my voice, saith Christ; The devil is often turned into an Angel of light to engage the Elect of God to careful considerate distinction; the Spirit of God shall sometimes tempt the *distinguishing power of Gods people; true piety must be approved, by a nick, or narrow point of obedience in every condition, and relation, avoyding all deviations, as well as defects; and this cannot be observed if not discerned; there is a simplicity of the Gospel, from which we must not be beguiled, a truth of the Gospel according to which we must walk with right steps; the outlet of distinction, is the inlet of delusion; neglect to discern the truth that you may embrace it in the love of it, and you shall easily believe lies: the Cautions in Scripture are to no purpose to men who cast off distinction; take heed what you hear, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and the like, are insignificant directions to men of no distinction: the neglect of*



of distinction, will make Peter a sinfull Conformist, as well as those pointed at in Heb. 10 25. were sinfull non-communicants: there is no estate in which we are in the world, which is not on both hands bounded with sin: are we Prosperous? it is a narrow point to receive the Creatures of God with thanksgiving, to use them humbly and with sobriety, not unto pride and tyranny, security and carnall confidence, in the casting off God, or contempt of our brethren: with discretion to esteem, enjoy, and use them as Gods good blessings, and yet not to abuse them to the satisfaction of our sensuall lust, and the entangling of our souls in sin: How Hard do we find it, in the day of affliction, and distresse, to shun sinfull, senselesse Apathie, Stoicall stupidity, and impatient anxiety, piercing grief or fear, heart-perplexing, God-provoking Cares and Complaints, not to lay aside, nor let our naturall passions break out, beyond the bounds of sobriety, reason or Religion: to fear without fretting, discerne danger without diffidence, to be angry without envy, to grieve without grudging, to mourn without murmuring, to be stricken and smitten of God, afflicted all the day long, and lye in silence, without repining or charging God foolishly, or charging piety to be perplexing folly, but to lay our Mouthes in the dust under our oppressed innocency, because the Lord hath done it: to be reviled of men, and not to revile again: to be oppressed and persecuted, yet free from revenge: to blesse them that curse us, and pray for them who despitefully use us, is a lesson not easily learned: truly, friends, my experience hath found it a strait Gate, & narrow way, to retain quick and lively senses, under the restraint of a lively faith: to fear and grieve, and yet not fly in the face of men, or forget God: I cannot but observe Apathy in afflictions is manifest prophaneesse: and impiety is no lesse then impious: God aggravateth Israels prophaneesse by their Stupidity and shamefull Apathy: when he set them on fire round about, they knew it not: It burned them and they layed it not to heart; he observeth as an argument of insensibility under his hand: He complaineth of them, as impudently impious, because when they were stricken they did not grieve: He chargeth it as an iniquity indelible to be merry and joviall in Feasts, and full expressions of joy, when his providence and their perplexing state doth call for weeping and mourning: and on the other hand he rebuketh excess of passion as no lesse prophane: Who Art thou that art affraid of the fury of the oppressor

Isa. 42. 25

Ier. 5. 3.

Isa 22. 12

13. 14.

Isa. 19. 12

13.

pressor, and forgettest the Lord thy maker : not to fear is inhumane ; to  
 fear without faith, is Unchristian ; not to care is contrary to reason,  
 to care unto vexations diffidence, concerning future events, is con-  
 trary to true Religion ; not to mourn in misery is incongruous to  
 men, (Subjects of sense and reason) to mourn as without hope is  
 incongruous to Christians, in whom reason is rectified, and di-  
 rected to expectation of a better change. The nature of patience  
 doth charge sin on both extreames; it presupposeth, it preserveth  
 passions existent; whilst it aboundeth, restraineth, regulateth the  
 same ; we have heard of the passions of Job ; I could never under-  
 stand the patience, and meekness of Malefactors, who suffered  
 the utmost sorrows, under the greatest, most manifest Guilt,  
 without the least of grief, or fear, commotion of mind or per-  
 plexing apprehension; Yea under the greatest ostentation of joy &  
 peace; being cannonized by their friends for Martyrs, on the on-  
 ly ground of their confidence : which (to the Blasphemy of  
 Christianity and its Martyrs) they call Christian courage; sure I  
 am that they who rejoyced with joy unspeakable and full of Glory,  
 beleiving in whom they had not seen, were in heaviness under all  
 kind of grief, through manifold temptations ; and they who trust-  
 ed in the living God, who had delivered, and would deliver,  
 were by the power of their passions pressed out of measure, and above  
 their Strength ; a due deportment in every condition as men, and  
 Christians, is a narrow strait, an estate of great difficulty and  
 danger; the same bounds and strait Limits attend our relation  
 and the duties thereof ; How hard for Subjects (as sincere David)  
 to retain Loyalty and affection towards oppressing persecuting  
 Princes ? How hard for Servants to be subject to their Masters,  
 not onely the meek and gentle, but also to the froward ? to do  
 well and suffer for it patiently, is an hard saying, who can bear  
 it ? This Straitness attends our whole Conversation, and the  
 course of our lives in common as Christians ; to continue Com-  
 munion with Christs Church, under many and great Corruptions, and  
 not to comply with and conforme unto sinfull impositions ; not to  
 leave Gods Ordinances when made grievous to the Soul by hu-  
 mane Appendants, and disorder ; not to cease the offerings of the  
 Lord, when the prophane and violent disorder of the  
 Sons of Elie make them loath the same ; to bear them who  
 say, but do not ; onely because they are in Moses chair :  
 to beware of the leaven of the Pharises, being bound to  
 hear them, who ordinarily teach for doctrines the traditions of

men, and make the word of God of none effect: to retain Church unity under its impurity, and attend Gospel-ministry in prophane subjects; to be zealous for reformation, without running into, or striking hands with separation, is, *hic labor hoc opus* to religious hearts who walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, a strait gate, a narrow way, a narrow Crisis and point of duty, which cannot be declined without danger; sin lying on both hands, by defect, or excess to destroy us: the way to heaven is apparently strait and narrow, because thus bounded and terminated; and for this reason our Saviour doth declare it so to be.

In this Sermon, our Saviour doth direct exact obedience into a narrow Crisis, and place perfection in a strait punctilio: The scope and drift of the Sermon is to shew the bounds and limits of the way of life, the restraints of Religion, which the error and superstition of the Jews had broken down, to the facilitating of their passage to Heaven.

His most pleasing Preface propoundeth poverty of Spirit, mourning, meekness, purity and persecution, and the like perplexing properties, as Conditions of the Beatitudes he doth declare: His directions unto duty begin with a determination of dread, *He that breaketh the least of these Commandements shall be least in the kingdom of Heaven*: and so proceeding to terminate duty by a clear exposition of the Law, he placeth the breach of the Law in a little, narrow point. Murther he determineth in a scornful word or gesture: Adultery in the cast of the eye: Disobedience in the neglect of a parent: prophaning Gods Name in a groundless and trivial Oath: the whole matters of his Sermon are most strict Rules, in the observation whereof he placeth perfection, in similitude to God: and in this very Text the strait is opposed to the wide Gate, the narrow to the broad way, the way of sin is an open Common, the champian ground, in which the mighty Hunters against the Lord doe sport themselves without any limits: but the way of Sanctity is an Enclosure, a passage perillous, sickle, difficult, dangerous, in which men cannot move without fear and care, without pain and grief, without crosses and losses, without smart and suffering, without pressing and striving, and yet out of it they may not turn to right or left hand without certain ruine.

The way to Heaven is a red Sea passage, in which there is no possibility of motion unto safety and life, but by going forward; for enemies are behind, and walls of water doe on each side enclose us; if we give back the enemies will destroy us; we cannot

step

step aside but the Sea will drown us ; by going forward we may meet with a wilderness march , and many encounters with the sons of *Anack* , and the Kings of the Countries through which we travel ; but we are sure at last to arrive at the Land of life and promise, for *strait is the gate and narrow is the way , which leadeth unto life .*

I have done with the explication of this Proposition : before I pass to application, I shall note and but note unto you the Arguments which doe convincingly demonstrate that *strait is the gate , and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life* , and I shall not wander to seek them, they are suggested in the Text, and are these.

*Life is the end* unto which this way doth lead , and that you heard before is an *estate of excellency* , its obtainment and effecting must needs be by *means of intricacy* ; *difficulty* is inseparably attendant on *dignity* : the passage into a Princes Pallace is not common or easie , but by many strait gates and dark entries : Pebbles lye common on the surface of the earth , but Pearles are hidden in the bowels thereof , and must be digged out with difficulty and danger : Needs there be any more said to convince you , that Grace and Holiness is a *strait gate and narrow way* , then to tell you it *leadeth unto glory* : this estate was not purchased without the Lord Jesus coming from Heaven , being tempted by the Devil , tormented by men , forsaken by God , and his passing through the straits of a shameful cursed death : and can we think it should lie common and open without guard or enclosure , for any that will , when they will , which way they will to enter into ? It is below its worth , and should expose it unto contempt.

This Gate and way is strait and narrow , because singular ; tis one , and 'tis but one . In this way we must go to Heaven , and out of this way we cannot get to Heaven ; singularity is alway attended with difficulty ; be this way never so foul & tiresome , never so tedious and troublesom , we have no other way in which we can walk to this end : all confinement is cross to mans spirit : How are men affrighted from , and afflicted in the wayes of godliness , because of reproach of singularity ? which should be rather their inducement and encouragement to perseverance with all diligence ; for the Heirs of Heaven are singulars , not every one that cryeth *Lord , Lord* : the way to Heaven is singular , but one enclosed , prescribed way , though our corrupt nature be disposed to run at liberty , and prophaneſs will bear no restraint , yet we must know we must keep close to Gods Commandements , and walk in the one way , the one

Gate of his appointment unto life. Nature hath made many wayes to death, and but one way of difficulty and danger to passe into life: and corrupt nature can and doth create many wayes to Hell: but the gift of God is eternall life, to be obtained in, and by that *one, and only way*, which he hath determinated bounded and revealed.

Argu. 3. This Gate and way to life is strait, and *narrow*, because *few* there be that find it: paucity of Travellers does make as well as proclaim difficulty in the way of motion: for because *few* passe through it, it is *untract*, *untrodden*, not easily to be discerned: Christs flock is a *little flock*, the Elect are but a *remnant*: - there are but a *few names* who are found faithfull: many may follow Christ but there are few will sell that they have, and give to the poor: some will deny themselves, take up their crosse and follow him many will call him Lord, Lord, but *few* will do what he saith: many may strive to enter in at the Strait Gate, but few are able to effect it: nor is there any more plain and clear demonstration of difficulty and danger then the paucity of those who passe through it: a common Road is a beaten Road, every man will travel the open way, few will take pains to passe through straits to the possessions of life and glory.

Argu. 4. This gate is a strait, this way is narrow, for there is in it no entrance, no proceffe without *diligence*: our Saviour did direct his curious questioners *to strive to enter in at the strait gate*, but this puts me upon the application.

Applicati- The Application of this Doctrine might be large, and vari-  
on. ous, but time will not allow me to expatiate: but doth constrain me to contract I will therefore passe by those many Inferences which flow from hence, and confine my selfe to my Text, and our Saviours method (*viz.*) an *exhortation*, affectionately to embrace and earnestly to presse forward in the strait gate and narrow way.

My beloved, be intreated seriously to reflect upon your thoughts, *that strait is the Gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life*, and let difficulty, persuade, provoke your diligence: consider the words and exhortation of our Saviour, *enter in at the strait gate, and narrow way*, so our Evangelists, doth report it: but Luke reporteth it, *strive to enter in at the strait Gate*: The duty is the same in both these Evangelists, though the different occasions



sions on which it was perswaded, caused some difference in ex-  
 pression; but both these sentences are considerable & have their Em-  
 phasis as St. *Mat.* presents it to us it guideth our *choice* & affecti-  
 ons to *embrace*: according to St. *Luke*, it provoketh our *industry* in  
 pursuit of our chosen object, that we may not miss to attain the  
 end: enter in at the strait gate, that is, *chuse*, and affectionately  
 embrace the way of danger and difficulty, in which you cannot  
 move without care and cost, without courage and consideration,  
 without pressing and perplexity; although your nature cannot  
 but affect ease, desire to walk at large, reluct under the very  
 thoughts of restraint, and regulation: be wise, be well advised by  
 me (saith our Saviour) who have, and know the issues of life and  
 death, to deny your selves, and direct your feet into the foul way;  
*strait gate and narrow paths*: cast your selves under divine directi-  
 on; passe your lives in an exact observancy of divine prescrip-  
 tion; receive the yolk, abide the bonds of the Lord Jesus Christ;  
 decline the way with, and in which flesh and blood is so much, so  
 well pleased, and resign up your mind, will, affections, actions and  
 passions, to the restraints of Reason, to the regulation of Religion:  
 answerable to this Exhortation is our Saviours Argument, drawn  
 from the end unto which this strait gate doth lead: *It leadeth un-*  
*to life*: as if he should have said, you see before you different  
 paths, you are to make your choice, be by me advised to consider,  
*that broad way, and wide gate, leadeth to destruction*; but this *strait*  
*gate and narrow way leadeth unto life*: guide therefore your affecti-  
 ons by the end you aim at, and enter in at the strait Gate. I  
 this day set before you life and death, chuse you which you will  
 take: I cannot but tell you, if you embrace the *broad way*, fol-  
 low the multitude to do evil, please your own lusts, and live as  
 you list, without regard to, or restraint by Gods holy Word, you  
 shall enjoy *present ease*, and *future endless misery*: but if you de-  
 cline this broad way, and enter the strait Gate, deny your selves,  
 enter the way of Gods Commandements, and walk uprightly in  
 them, not turning aside to the right or left hand, you must in-  
 deed undergo present hardship, but shall hereby attain unto,  
 arrive at eternal happiness.

Let the end, the last in your enjoyment be the first thing in your  
 intention, and you cannot stick in your thoughts what to chuse:  
 who will not labour for life, rather then lie still and die? Who  
 will not pass some straits to possess such glory, rather then live  
 in pleasure and lose salvation for ever? who at the day of judge-  
 ment



ment will not chuse the portion of *Lazarus* before that of *Dives*? How sad a check is it to *Dives* comforts to hear the Lord say, *Thou hast now thy good things, but shalt be hereafter tormented*? How reviving refreshing is it to poor *Lazarus*, to know the Lord looketh on his low estate, and resolveth, that he, in this life afflicted, shall be in *Abrahams* bosom abundantly comforted, cost what it can, be it never so strait and narrow, enter in at the strait gate, it leadeth unto life.

According to St. *Luke*, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate*; enter in to it, for life is the end of it, strive unto this entrance for you labour for life, and that calleth for the utmost diligence and violence of endeavours: strive not feebly and faintly, but with force and vigor; press forward in it with strength and vivacity, with power unto perplexity: strive unto, and again, until you sweat, until you bleed again, press into this narrow passage, until you be immured and perish, if need so require: stretch your limbs until you be not able to stand; walk with, wait on God, untill and after you are weary: you cannot live with God unless you love God, you cannot love God unless you embrace him: pursue him with all your heart, with all your might, with all your soul, with all your strength: you seek salvation, though it is not wages, you must work for it, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, with a fear of diligence, not of diffidence and despondency: a sight of *Israels* glory will make a cursing *Balaam* cry out, *Oh that I might die the death of the righteous, and that my latter end might be like his*: but the laborious life of the righteous can only secure the happy death which passeth into eternal life. Heaven is not had with a wet finger: short-winded wishes will never set any in the haven of everlasting happiness: the slothful in Christianity can never inherit the promise: the kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, the violent take it by force: fight so as to get victory, so run as to obtain, so wrestle as to prevail, so strive as to be able to enter the strait gate, for strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life.

Give me leave to enforce this general Exhortation, unto an industrious pressing on in holiness, and heavens way, by some few motives, which may perswade with you, and make you see the necessity thereof.

Consider therefore:

Heavens way is an *hard way*, it is a way of difficulty, must be walked in with diligence: it is a way of danger, must be traversed with care: tis a way of *dolour* and distress must be moved in with *deliberation* and *discretion*: Heavens way is an *hard way*, because as you have

have heard it is *terminated* and *bounded*, out of which there is no starting on either side, with the least of safety: Besides that, 'tis thus hard in it self, it is made more hard by these things which attend it, or rather *us* in the entrance into this *Strait Gate*: and narrow way for it is to every the Sons of men.

A way of *obscurity*; hard to *finde out*, hard to be travelled in, it is a *Mystery*: Great is the *mystery of Godlinesse*: *Mysteries* are not easily understood, it is a peculiar priviledge, a special favour: a guift from heaven, from God, to *know the mysteries of the Kingdome of Heaven*: this is not obvious to every eye; the *natural man* receiveth not the things of God, for they are specially discerned: this way obscure in it self is *untrodden*, few there be who find it: the tract is *small and litle*, not easily discerned: the *footsteps found*, are to be followed, but their impression is so litle that they are soon worn out: Examples of exact obedience are very few: one *Noah* serving providence in the means of his own appointment, is the *Preacher of Righteousnesse*: to the old world, one *Abraham* is the patterne of perfect resignation to God al sufficient: one *Moses* for *meeknesse*, one *Iob*, for *patience*, one *David*, for *Integrity*, and so singular Saints have trodden, the tracts of speciall Graces, in the way to Heaven: and their footsteps are to be found with most diligent search and accurate observation: this obscure and trodden way to life: is perplexed with many *intricacies*, and *doubts*, which do arise from the variety of Gods providence, and variation of our condition how to carry in a single, how in a married? ho to carry in an adverse, how in a prosperous state, how to carry in society, and variety of Society? how to carry in solitudes? how to live by faith in all conditions? how to live under Gods Ordinances, under all dispensations how to do the duty of a Minister and of a common member to the Church? How to pursue the purity, and how to preserve the entity or the Church? how to advance the power of godlinesse? and how to attend and edify our selves by Gods Ordinances, under confused corrupt disorderly prophane administration? In a word how to perceive, and performe the Crisis and Punctilio of Piety pointed out, and to be put into art by and under the present providence, so as not to slip into sin on either hand, are such cases of conscience, and doubts of minde which must, but cannot (with ease, nor without much diligence, and difficulty) be resolved, for our guidance in the strait narrow pathes, which lead to life and glory.

Yet again consider this obscure, untrodden and perplexed way

Heavens  
way ob-  
scure. 7

1 Tim. 3.

16.

Mar. 13.

11.

1 Cor. 2.

14.

to Heaven : is more hard to find, to enter, by the many by-pathes and *delusive deviations* which lye on each-side therof: what necessity to try the Spirits: many Spirits not being of God, so many errors in doctrine, darkning the faith, such subtil insinuations of seducers, drawing from the truth, that the Ministers of God cannot but fear the people should be beguiled from the simplicity of the Gospell, And the people cannot but find by *Peters* fall, it is an hard matter to walk up rightly according to the truth of the Gospell, the Devil transforming himself into an Angell of light is not soon or easily discerned, or discovered: good men may be catched with error; yea *Peter* and *Barnabas* good men, and Ministers may be carried away: with the dissimulation of seducers; for the *false Apostles* appear even as the *Apostles of Iesus Christ*; obscurity must provoke enquiry and serious study, for the narrow bounds of truth and Piety are not discerned, without much difficulty.

Heavens  
way oppo-  
sed.

Heb. 10.  
23

Ephc. 6.  
12.

Rom. 8.7.

Gal. 5.

This is a way of no lesse ob'curity, then *opposition*: Christianity is a *constant militation*; Whatsoever be the mutations of humane affairs in the world the Church of Iesus Christ is; and must be militant; till he come in Glory being entered we make no progress in piety without blowes; Godliness is the taking of a Garrison, the Gate is hardly gained, and that entered, every step in the streets is to follow the stroak of a begun victory: after, yea immediately after, they were *militant*, they endured a *great fight of afflictions*; *Israe* possesseth not the Land of Promise but by the per suit of *Egypt*, passage through the Sea, Conflicts with, and unto the Conquest of the Sons of *Anak*, and Kings of the Countries: and sincere Saints must cut their wayes to heaven: Wrestling not with flesh and blood, but against *Principalities and powers* against the *Rulers of the darkness of this world* and *spirituall wickedness, in high Places*: so subtle and many are the temptations of the Devil, that it is hard for the most serious soldier under Christs Banner to be able to stand against the *Wiles of the Devil*. Oh strait Gate: Oh narrow way; where our hands must h w and cut open the way in which our feet must tread; if we will find eternall life: this way is yet the more difficult and strait, beccause our depraved nature is averse unto this obscure, opposed way; The natural man is at *enmity with God*; mans soul cannot receive righteousness, without reluctancy; holiness is not only *Supernatural*, and above our reach, but *contranatural* and against our disposition, Constitution, and Inclination; Heavens way is uphill, and against heart; we are loath to enter the Gate, and more loath to proceed in the way to life; many strive but are not able to enter we are by nature of dull Capacity to discern sloathfull to endeavour: and therefore move heavily in undertakeing the profession of piety: we are by nature feeble, ready to faint under difficulty; fearful of heart, ready to fall back, on the first assaults of opposition; we are by nature of a wandering spirit, apt to go astray. *Error and Schism*s, are the fruits of our flesh; VVe can easily deviate into by-pathes, turn aside from the way of truth; a direct Course is a matter of great difficulty and much diligence.

Christians

Christians, if in good earnest you seek life, you must strive; you cannot without great struggling unto and against, vanquish the difficulties of obscurity, opposition, and your own aver-  
seness to the way to Heaven.

Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for your entrance is indispensably necessary; the gate to life is but one; and no entrance into this gate without striving: No possibility of salvation but in Gods way, be it never so contrary to our own will: And so narrow is the punctilio of piety, and passage to life that a passion, a point of good manners doth many times diversions, and endanger our salvation; Davids flouting did almost, and Peters fear did altogether trip up his heels in the way of truth; he walked not with a right foot: yet Peters good manners must be sometimes rebuked by his Masters pity, *If I wash thee not thou hast no part in me*: Be Gods way never so repugnant to reason, a proud Naaman must stoop to it, or retain his Leprosie to his ruine; be the gate to heaven never so much against our Will, we must into it, for we have no other way: He that loveth any thing, though life it self, better then Christ is not worthy of him. The gate and way to life is most certainty, *Causa sine qua non*; if we will not strive we cannot enter; and if we do not strive, let us profess Christ at what rate we will, and possess the dispensations of Christs Gospel, privileges of his Church, and presence, in what measure we can; when we would enter life we may knock in vain, for the Lord will protest he knoweth us not, we were not under his conduct in the way, and may not therefore come into his communion in the end of our Religion.

Motive 2.

Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for the success is certain unto serious and constant diligence; your industry shall be enforced to its end; God is not bound, but he doth not deny his grace to such as strenuously, rudiously press in the way of his commandments: This is the Argument by which the Apostle persuadeth diligence and activity for salvation, *Work out* (saith he) *your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his own pleasure*. Such as proceed in the conflict under Christs Banner, shall not fail in their conquest; such as persevere in pressing forward, shall find

Motive 3.

the grace of Christ sufficient for them, until they apprehend that *portion* which they were apprehended of Christ Jesus. Our Saviour indeed telleth us, *many did strive but were not able*; but you must understand it aright, they strove *unto*, not *in* the act; they strove under the pangs of conviction, put forth many good purposes; but these proved abortive, and never passed into act; their hearts were never indeed set on God, on Christ, on Holiness; their judgements were herein informed, but their affections were not herein inflamed; for he that hath an heart shall never want strength to go to heaven; strive in the entering, proceeding act; and we shall prove he who *both begun his good work shall and will perfect it, unto the day of his Grace*.

Motive 4.

Heb. 11. 13.

Strive *we* to enter the strait gate, for the end is more worth than the utmost of our endeavours; Heaven will make amends for all the hardship of the way thither. How did the Patriarchs press on the bare perceptions of faith, *not having received the promise* (which we have performed) *but seeing them afar off*, saluting them at a distance; our Lord Jesus hath led us this way, for the joy which was set before him, he endured the cross, and despised the shame. The conscience of duty will make a sincere Saint confess, that in the most exact of his obedience, he is an *unprofitable servant*; but when we shall come to make a sensible comparison between the dignity we receive, and the diligence we used, the difficulties we felt, we shall find cause to cry out, by *Grace we are saved*. The light and momentary afflictions through which we pass here, are not to be compared to the exceeding, eternal weight of glory which we shall enjoy hereafter. Our present pressing, fighting, striving in heavens way may cost us many a weary step, and weeping eye, many sighs and groans, many prayers and tears, many cares and fears, many an aching head and heart; It may cost us our best worldly enjoyments, dearest Relations, and our very life, but cost what it will, it can never cost too dear. If once we arrive at this Haven we shall sit down without the least repining, repenting thought that ever it cost so dear; we would not for ten thousand times as much have lost eternal life.

Christian Friends, I hope the consideration of these things



things will excite your diligence, and provoke you to press through the many difficulties and dangers which are in the way to heaven, and stir up your selves to strive to enter in at the *strait gate*, and go forward in the *narrow way which leadeth unto life*. What now remaineth but that I present you with some few Directions, which being well observed may facilitate your passage to glory, alleviate your burden, and make Christianity, the course of piety, a course of more delight and ease. Observe therefore these Rules for your help herein.

*Go not without God*; march after the Captain of your Salvation; under the conduct of the Lord of Hosts; the presence of God is the prop of the soul in all perplexity; the most certain protection of his people in all their distresses and dangers; the only assurance and encouragement that God ever gave, or his servants ever desired in all their undertakings of difficulty and danger was, *his presence*; *Jeremiah* must stand as an iron wall, and pillar of brass against Kings, Princes, Priests, Prophets, people; under the alone protection of, *I will be with thee, saith the Lord*; So also do the Ministers of the Gospel. *Gods presence* is the best security in all our straits; his Spirit will guide us into all truth, resolve all our doubts, and be a voice unto us saying, *This is the way walk in it*. When we are ready to wander on the right or on the left hand, his Providence will supply all our wants, his Grace will support all our weakness; in a word, whatsoever be our temptation his wisdom will find for us a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it; for if *God be with us, who can be against us?* what can be too hard for us? *I know how to want, and how to abound; I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*, was the Apostles, and is every Saints experience.

Christian Friends, your progress towards heaven is as a *Wilderness march* to the Land of Promise; *stir not without God*. Take up *Moses* resolution, *Verily if thou go not with us, we will not go up hence*: Be not put off with an *Angel*, the Angels are undoubtedly ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation: We owe much to God for the Ministry of the Angels,



Isa. 49. 25.  
Is. 14. 19.

they pitch their tents about them that fear him, and keep them in all their ways. But (my beloved) the difficulties which attend our salvation can only be vanquished by a Divine Arm, they are too strong for any created being; to divide the Sea when the waves roar upon the Captive exile, hastening to be delivered, it is the work of the Lord of Hosts; to take away the captive from the mighty, and to deliver the prey of the terrible, is the proper act of the mighty God of Jacob. Move not without God, as ever you mean to move with strength and success; for of our selves we can do nothing; the Lord is he who worketh our works in us and for us, both to will and to do.

Help 2.

Get and study a right Map of Heaven; get the description of the City of life, for the nature and situation thereof will not only enflame your affections, and add wings to your endeavours, but will help us to guess how to steer our course whitherward: To be well skilled in the Map is the great benefit of travel: And to have good intelligence of the enemies Quarter, is the great advantage of Warfare: The paths of peace are only made known by Wisdom. The Prince of life can only reveal the state and passage unto life: The Lord Jesus, resolved his Disciples to be more than half in Heaven, when he could assure them they knew the place, and they knew the way. My beloved cleave close to the Scriptures, and study them, they shew the new Jerusalem which is above, the Rivers, Rocks and shelves, the Ports, Creeks, Straits and narrow passages which you pass; the dangers and difficulties which attend you in your passage, the people and Enemies you must encounter, and how you may direct your selves in all these. Christians, know that the light of Nature is too dark to describe the dignity or difficulties; the dictates of men, the traditions of the Church, the determination of Council, the Laws of Princes, are improper, imperfect directions to the duties whereby we travel to Heaven. I despise not those, but give them their due honor; But I would have you to remember Israels wilderness-march to the Land of promise was in every step directed by the immediate Oracle of God: And the act of Faith did direct the Patriarchs through many narrow, strait

strait passages, to seek the City not made with hands, and the Scriptures were written that you may believe Christ is the way, and that by believing you may have eternal life, search then the Scriptures, for in them you think, and I am sure you have eternal life.

Help 3.

*Gain an account what it may cost you to get to Heaven: Premonitus, premunitus;* a foreseen Charge is easily defrayed; our Saviours Advice is, that we be wise Master builders, and politique Warriors, to forecast, a capacity to effect, before we undertake an enterprize; and to compleat the Fabrick, before we lay the Foundation; he who can account all things *lost and dung* in comparison of Christ, will easily insult over difficulty in Heavens way; and triumphantly resolve *neither distress, nor tribulation, nor persecution, nor peril, nor sword, nor famine, nor nakedness*, shall be able to separate from his love of Christ, but in these he shall be *more than a Conqueror*; they who consider it is written of Gods Servants, *for thy sake we are killed all the day long, and accounted sheep for the slaughter*, will not think much to lay down or lose his life in the Gate, by pressing in the narrow way to life; Convince we our selves that Christ will have our *all, or none of us*, he will be embraced above all, he hath declared who soever loveth *Lands, Houses, or Wife, or Children, or life itself better than him, is not worthy of him*, we then shall easily deny our selves, and take up our cross and follow him; Remember we, that through much tribulation we enter into Heaven, that the true Religion and course of Godliness did and doth call for the loss of all outward comforts, and proponnd future glory, *a better and more during substance*; we shall then take joyfully the spoiling of our goods; expectation maketh hard things to be born with ease.

Rom. 8. 38, 39.

Help 4.

*Grave upon the soul principles of true Religion*, the first principles of the Oracles of God; for these as the basis, or ground plot of any building, as the axioms of any Art or Science, or as the first draught of the Picture, do facilitate and direct the future structure, and perfection; and are in all straits eminently serviceable; Gods method to make his people walk in

in his way; is to ~~impose~~ *impose* his Law upon their *beasts*; untaught souls having confused notions of faith, which through want of order, and ability, do perplex and entangle themselves in the ways of piety, many times in a blind zeal they confound the substance, and Circumstances of Gods Ordinances; and make a defect in the one, equally heinous as in the other; and not knowing how to guide their judgments, they charge upon themselves duties whereof their relation or condition doth deny them to be capable; be sure you lay in the soul the first principles of the Oracles of God, and then leave them by a regular progress in Christianity; sure I am, that some, yea many souls are ship-wracked for want of ballanced judgements: many lose all by lifting themselves up to the dignities of Saints, not once acquainting themselves with the duties of Saints; and pretend unto the joys of believing, without once pondering the principles of faith; the unacquainted with, will easily ere from the faith; seducers need no better a Subject for their design, then simple souls affected to, but ignorant of the truth, and way to life.

Help 5.

Get, keep, and exercise a spirit of discerning; In all your getting, get understanding; Wisdom to guide our affairs will make our burden easie, the spirit of grace and sanctification is a spirit of discerning, the spiritual man judgeth all things; Heavens way is in nothing so strait and narrow as in the bounds which restrain us; the dangers which on all sides limit it; true piety lyeth in such narrow points that without a clear judgment and good understanding we cannot hit it; the Devil and his instruments are so politique and subtle, that without a spirit of discerning they will readily delude, they lead captive silly souls; through want of wisdom we entangle our selves, and many times make stumbling stones in our own way; want of judgment causeth superstitious scrupulosity, rash censuring, vain presumption, and feigned reverence; he that is not able to discern between good and evil; will many times condemn good as evil, and take evil for good; will through fear of sin fly duty, or be bold to rush into sin without fear; he will not respect, or he will renounce Gods Ordinances, because of mens disorders; or else he will impose his own inventions

ventions, and think to please God by a voluntary humility. By the spirit of discerning, believers must prove Doctrines, trie the spirits, distinguish Ministers, know the Devil when appearing an Angel of light; differ Christs Church, from the flocks of Christs Companions, and discern Gods Ordinances from humane inventions, conversant about them, or in their room and stead, and direct their own conversation in, and according to the speciality of duty, which the providence of God and their present state doth require. And know how to chuse or refuse things indifferent; and sever them from things necessary, and walk with even, upright feet according to the truth of the Gospel. Follow God with the ease and freedom of those Travellers who see and know their way; no difficulty like darkness in the things which are to be beleived and done, because life, and eternal life is dependant thereupon.

*Give up your selves, your whole selves to the will of God. Sub-* Help 6.  
 jection is an estate of ease; nothing but a stubborn nature and perverse Will can perplex them who are at the command of others: How easie are the hard things of Warfare, by the keeping of the Souldiers in strict obedience to their Officers? shall not it be much more such to us, if we will yeild free and full obedience to the Captain of our Salvation? Let therefore your judgement guide affection; piety, prevail against policy; what you *should*, against what you *would* do. Let Gods Will once revealed become unto you the reason of all obedience in action, and acquiescency in passion; pray heartily and in truth *Father in Heaven let thy will be done*, captivate carnal reason, and bring every proud thought and high imagination in subjection to the will of Christ, debates of flesh and blood are distracting to the mind, and destructive to the soul. *Paul* found not a more ready way then not to reason with flesh and blood, when God was pleased to reveal himself to him. Let the eye of reason read Gods will revealed, and then by faith silence the debates, and lead captive this depraved power; resignation unto Gods will is the formality of true obedience; therefore called *obedience of faith*, and this obedience can be the one yecall property of Gods Children. Gods will is and can

be the onely warrant of his worship; to offer God mans inventions, is to go a whoring from him; and to rebel against him; our Religion must be according to his express direction. It is the great anxiety of the godly to know the will of God; but obedience or a readines and resolvednes to believe what he shall speak, to do what he shall direct; and to suffer meekly what he shall dispose, is a discharge thereof; for he that will do, shall know the Will of God: the bending carnal, wrangling reason to the pleasure of the most high, will pass us with much ease through the strait Gate and narrow way which doth lead to life.

Help 7.

*Go in good Company*; it is not good for man to be alone, was Gods reason for creating humane society; solitude is not more sad then dangerous; *two are better then one, if one fall the other will lift up*; go therefore in company towards Heaven; it is Gods direction that we should assemble our selves, and go in troops to his Sanctuary, and call upon one another to go up to Zion: Christian Souls stand charged with one another. It was saying beleeving a cursed Cain, *Am I my Brothers keeper?* Gospel Counsel is that Christians consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works, that they exhort one another daily, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and that if any be overtaken with a fault, he be restored by a spirit of meekness. I confess there are few who walk in Heavens way, and find out the strait gate and narrow way, yet there are some and it will be hard indeed that we stand or go alone in the perplexing paths of life; say therefore as David, *I am a Companion for them who fear God.*

In the choice of your company be sure you look to two things; Keep in Gods true Church, and under Gods true Ministers. These are the most certain conducts unto glory, the very Ship and Pilots which convey us unto Life; by, and unto these are dispensed the promises of Grace, and Covenant of Salvation, union with, and subjection unto these, is our security in all straits, and propriety in all the promises, God hath promised nothing to individual persons, but all things to and for his Church; and so to the Sons of Zion, as members of his Church, non-continuare in Communion

with



with the Church, is in Gospel language, *not holding the bread*, by which the whole is increased. Separation from the Church is most certainly destructive; to be cast out of Christs Church is the severest doom on this side of the last Judgement; and to cast our selves out of the Church, is the greatest and saddest sin that can be, on this side the sin against the Holy Ghost: They are equally in danger who throw themselves, and who are thrown overboard by others. I could never yet know how to differ the estate (more then by the sin of it) of a *self-excommunicate*, and an *excommunicate by the Church*: Gods ordinary power and presence of grace is confined to his Church Catholique Visible (for of the invisible these things cannot be predicated) and therefore *ex Ecclesia nulla salus*. All men of all opinions concerning the form of the Church, do agree in this, *That there is no ordinary way of salvation out of the Church*; and all Churches constituted of old, or gathered of late oppose themselves, and are opposed to the world; calling the men of the world into communion with them, as ever they look to be saved; and cast into the World, and so unto Satan, the god of the world, whomsoever they cut off from the Church.

The Church of God may backslide, and be defiled; the Ministers of God may be careless and negligent; yea prophane, proud and persecuting; the sheep may be not only not looked after, but driven and violently scattered on Gods mountains; their waters may be pulled, and their pastures trodden down; Gods Worship may be defiled by corrupt Appendants, and so his Ordinances may be disorderly administered, and his Word may be made of none effect by mens traditions; the keys of the Kingdom may be turned against those who follow Christ: and these evils are not only provoking unto Gods jealousy, but also a sad Omen of his departure; and the Churches approaching devastation and dissolution: But yet, whilst they continue really a *Church*, and relatively *his Church*, and retain his substantial, essential worship and Ordinances, and he continueth his own Ministry and presence, though his provoked, reproving presence; departing, expostulating presence, those that fear his name, and mourn for the abominations they cannot mend, must not withdraw themselves, despise or neglect his Ordinances, or decline his



publike, solemn Worship. When the sons of Ely by their prophaneſs, and the violent diſorder of their Miniſtration, cauſed the people to *loath the offerings of the Lord*, I find not that any did leave off or forbear to bring them: And when the Image of Jealouſie was in the Temple, and brought God to the threshold ready to depart, I find not that the people fled from it. Chriſtians, we muſt follow, not go before God: When he removeth the Candleſtick; then we may ſeek light elſewhere; but if his Ordinances abide his, though by dim and dark lights, they are in *Moses chair*, and we muſt hear them. I could never yet underſtand by that caution (*Be-ware of the leaven of the Pharifees*) *hear them not*; for they teach for doctrines the traditions of men. I cannot but commend to your ſerious conſideration the prayer of the men who did fear God; and Gods answer unto them, in a caſe of diſorder in, and defection from the true Church; it is in Cant. 1. 7, 8. *Tell me, O thou whom my ſoul loveth, wherethou feedeſt thy flock, wherethou makeſt them to reſt at noon; for why ſhould I turn aſide by the flocks of thy Companions? If thou know not, O thou faireſt among women, go thy way forth by the footſteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beſide the ſhepherds tents*: The men who feared the Lord were at a loſs for to finde and determine the Aſſembly in which Gods gracious preſence might be enjoyed: they were afraid of falling into the flock of Chriſts Companions, who were ſeparated Aſſemblies, gathered, ſelf-constituted Aſſemblies; worſhipping the true God with his own Ordinances, as to the matter, but by a ſelf-conſecrated Miniſtry in ſelf determined places (and defective in the eſſential form) and for their profeſſion, and preſence of relation to Chriſt called his *Companions*: In this ſtate they ſeriously enquire and pray God for direction what to do, and which way to turn; and he directeth them by two marks, as ſtanding and infallible ſigns, by which to ſteer their courſe; *The footſteps of his flock*, the ſolemn celebration of his own Worſhip: And the *Shepherds tents*, the regular exiſtency of his Miniſters, by the order of his appointment. Give me leave to note unto you ſome obſervations of an Author, whoſe name hath more acceptance and authority with many among you then what I can ſay. He reſerveth this Scripture hiſtori-

cally to the state of those who feared God under *Jerobshams* Schism and rebellion; and when *Judah* was defiled with *Solomons* High-places and Idolatry; and inferreth, *A Church is black, its deformities stand in the fall, and sins of the people and Princes; in their folly, declining to Idolatry, in their schisms and rents from their mother; in their prophaneſs, apoſtacy and rebellion in Church and Commonwealth.*

Cotton.

He observeth, there may be a true comely Church in the midst of these deformities; the sins of the Princes and people may make the Church black, but cannot take away her comeliness; run we not therefore from the Church because of her blackness, but run to her and embrace her in the midst of her defections.

This teacheth the children of the Church not to separate from the Church for corruption sake.

It was a sin in them who were angry with the Church, as some of the separation are and do depart from us: *What, and if some cast off England shall we reject her, because some of the sons of her Mother do so.*

Here is shewed two marks of the true Church of God; The footsteps of his flocks, Assemblies of Gods people to his true Ordinances; and his own Ministers.

Thus far, and in these words doth this reverend Author, though afterwards a great countenancer of the thing he here condemned. This I say Christians, it may sound harsh in your ears, but you must let it sink into your hearts. The Church defiled and disordered, must not be despised or declined; the Worship and Ordinances of God uncomfortably, unprofitably administred; yea with some superfluous Appendants must not be disowned, or determined evil; but embraced and attended as his Worship. The crisis of pietie in this case, is to maintain our converse with God in his own Ordinances, dispensed in a mode, grievous yea loathsome to our souls; continue our communion when we mourn for what we cannot mend. Observe it, Christs Ministrie was most vehemently, convincingly, enragingly investigative against the erroneous Doctrines, prophane and superstitious lives of the Church of the Jews, and her Priests, and Teachers, yet he continued communion with her, and appeared an Advocate for her against the flocks of his companions, self-gathered, constituted Churches;

~~we know what we worship~~; *Soluation is of the Jews*: So long as Gods Ordinances are salvably dispensed, take heed to your own personal actions, in any imposed or directed evils, and disorders; mourn over the imposition and administration which may extend a guilt on the Church collectively, but disown not the Church, despise not the Ministry, decline not the Worship whilst they exist ~~the Lords~~. Look to it that your zeal to purity, break not unity; and your loathing humane Inventions, make you not leave Gods Institutions: You are Christs sheep, as you will be led, be looked after by the shepherd and Bishop of your souls, see to it that you leap not out of his fold. You may have your waters puddled, your pastures trodden, the proud of the flock to push you with horn and with hoof; your Pastors may rule you with pride and with cruelty, *Lording it over Gods heritage*; and you (they being careless of you) may be dispersed: But I beseech you, when the great shepherd shall come to judge between sheep and sheep, between you and your shepherds, let him finde you on the *mountains of Israel*, though scattered and afflicted. Communion with the Church under corruption may not be very comfortable, but be assured it shall be safe. Reformation must be mournfully endeavoured, but Separation will never effect it, it will for ever hinder, supplant, subvert it. I must tell you my determination is by Gods grace to *seek purity of Ordinances in union with the Church*, and by non-conforming communion to witness against, and endeavour to remove disorder and corruption.

Ezek. 34.

*Go continually Armed*; your course of piety is a constant militation, be then wary Soukdiens, be Armed Cap-a-pe, take unto you the whole Armour of God, *that you may be able to resist in the evil day*; have your Loyns girt with verity, principles of truth, the spirit of a sound mind; your breast guarded with the *breastplate of Righteousness*, integrity of heart; your head covered with the *helmet of hope*, which will under the greatest Billows and most roaring Waves hold your head above the water; have your feet shod with patience, the *preparations of the Gospel of peace*. In every step you set you have sharp shells, heart-peircing, passion-provoking crosses, losses,

Job 8.

Isa. 54.

ses, distresses and afflictions, you have need of patience, that when you have done the Will of God you may inherit the promise; you cannot without patience continue in well doing unto the obtainment of the Glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life, which you do seek; take with you the shield of faith in Gods declared will for Doctrine or practise, in Gods glorious properties, and gracious promises, those will quench the most fiery darts of the Devil; take unto you the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, to cut down your way, kill your Lust, the Worlds allurements, and the Devils suggestions; thus armed stand fast in your Christian resolution, but move forward; advance in your Christian conversation, and you shall with ease encounter and overcome all opposition for the Captain of our Salvation hath led our enemies captive, and looketh that we defend our own souls against the subtil, malicious strokes of a subdued, though our sworn Enemies.

*Guess your way by the compass of the Covenant, the Lord* Help 9.  
hath condescended to deal with man by way of Covenant, for the effecting of his Salvation; this is a Covenant of Grace, Grace is the ground of it, it was freely made, for we had no obligation on Gods Justice, or power to constrain or exact it; Grace is the matter of it, I will be your God, you shall be my people, you shall walk in my ways, my spirit shall be in your hearts; Grace is the form of it, I will be your God, I will write my Law on your hearts, I will put my spirit within you, you shall walk in my ways, my grace shall be sufficient for you; Grace is the end of it, our sanctification here, and our salvation hereafter, and the means necessary unto both in the way of their obtainment; and our pursuit of them; This Covenant is the Contract of the Bible, the compendium of the Gospel, Christ is Mediator, the Ministers are dispensers, Ordinances are the dispensations, Faith and Obedience are the conditions, Grace and Glory, with all good things is the matter of this everlasting Covenant; this Covenant, like a Compass, points at all parts of Heaven; when we are in the wide Ocean of the World, out of sight of any Land to guide us, we may steer by this Compass to our desired Haven; when we are in darkness and danger between the narrow Creeks, and  
strait

strait passages of *Sylla* and *Caribdis*, this *Covenant* is a light, a *Lanthorn* at Land to guide us, unto that Nick and narrow point which will secure us?

Christians, the comfort of this Covenant is not known till being shut up from men, secluded from Ordinances, and under the want of all means (it may be so much as a Bible) you begin to reflect your Relation to God, Gods Dispensations of grace to man, and call to mind the Indenture, and Charter which doth secure, declare, and direct both; This Covenant will dissolve our doubts, direct our duties, and dictate our comforts in all straits, in all conditions, this and that I must do, or not do; this and that I must expect, or not expect; this is or that is truth, or Error will be easily inferred by him, who is interested in, and understandeth the Covenant of Salvation; by this, when I a poor Gentile consider *Abraham* is ignorant of me, and *Jacob* knoweth me not, can yet cry unto the Lord *thou art my God*; by this when I am in the Furnace; I can cry unto the Lord, my God, and apprehend him, answering me my people; I can understand by this the word which speaketh unto us as Children, say, *my Son despise not the chastening of the Lord*; I hereby know correction, paternal castigation to be the result of affection from God, and relation to God, and so when I sit in darkness and can see no light, I can trust in the name of the Lord, and stay my self upon my God, faithful in Covenant, who will not fail me; I hereby discern sin, and detect error to be eschewed; discover truth and duty to be embraced and pursued. In a Word, what the word doth more amply and abundantly declare when I am at liberty to use, the Covenant of Grace doth suggest, and from thence I may infer it for my comfort and guidance when restrained; the good therein promised I may boldly challenge; the evil thereunto repugnant I must reject; the truth and dutie thereby dictated I must receive, and do; you look for experience, and I tell you this in the uprightness of my heart, in my late condition the Covenant of Grace was my great comfort, the consideration of the Covenant was my counsel. I would not for all the world have been ignorant of, uninterested in, or estranged unto the Covenant of God: *Go you and do likewise*. If you are confounded in your passage to life,



life, it is for want of the Compass of the Covenant, or skill to use it.

*Go forward in Heavens way*, being entred the strait *Help 10.*  
gate and narrow way stand not still; motion will make it easie: Travellers are more tired at the beginning then end of their journey, because not used to such violence; custom in all things become a second nature; whatsoever you do go not back; *non progredi est regredi* in heavens way; not to go forward is to go backward: The enemy will come upon you, if you advance not against him: Remember *Lots wife*; take heed of backsliding, you will thereby hinder your selves in heavens way, and wound your consciences; take heed of *Apostacy from the faith*, you will thereby ruine your salvation and hurt religion. Consider, *The just live* (that is persevere in grace and holiness) *by faith*; but if any man draw back Gods soul shall have no pleasure in him. Be it your care not to be found in the number of them *who draw back unto perdition*, but of them *who beleeve unto salvation of their soul*: Having begun in the Spirit do not end in the flesh; inure your selves unto hardship, be *stedfast and unmovable*, and you cannot but *abound in the work of the Lord*, nor shall your *labours be in vain*. *Hel. 10. 38, 39.*

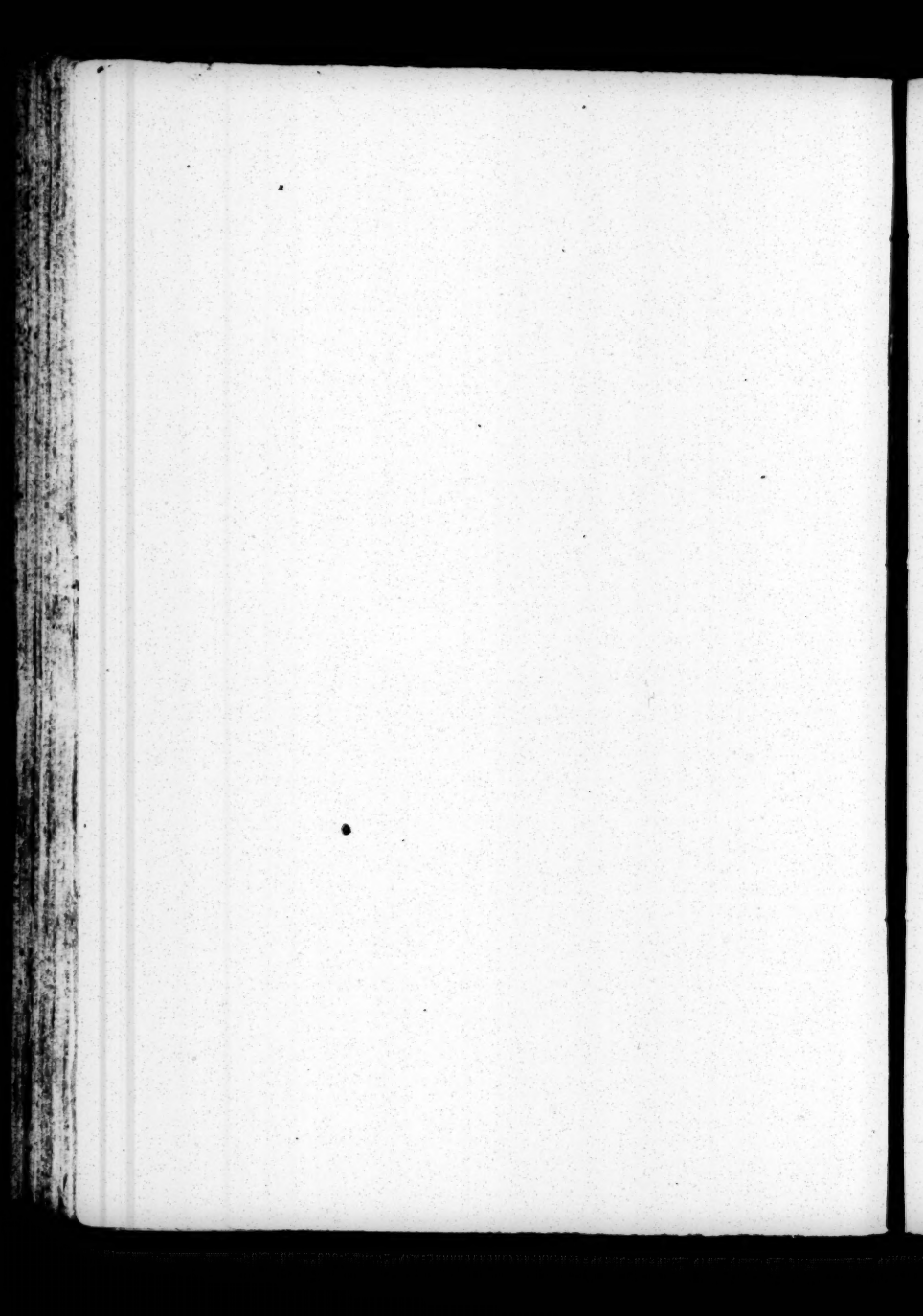
Beloved Friends, the way to life being bounded with such dangerous precipices, beset with such difficulties and opposition, and your depraved nature being apt to wander, averse and indisposed to diligence and activity in holiness, you cannot but find *strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be who finde it*. But I beseech you enter, chuse to enter, it is the way to life: Strive to enter, it is strait; observe, practice these Directions now given, by Gods grace your entrance will be an act of ease and success. Consider what you have heard, and the Lord give you understanding.

FINIS.









# REFORMATION

NOT  
SEPARATION:

OR,

Mr. CROFTON's Plea for Communion with the CHURCH, under those Corruptions, and by that disorderly Ministration to which he cannot Conform, nor by it Administer.

IN A  
LETTER,

*Written JULY 20. 1661.*

In, and from the TOWER of LONDON, to R. S. To satisfie the Weak, and silence the Wicked, who insulted in, or were offended at his endeavoured ( and clamorously reported as obtained ) attendance on Gods PUBLICK WORSHIP in that Place, during his Confinement.

NOW PUBLISHED,

To silence Censures and Calumnies, satisfie such who would walk uprightly in this houre of Temptation.

---

By the said R. S. to whom it was written.

---

*Unto which, is added the Copy of another LETTER,  
Written on the same Occasion and Subject.*

---

Printed in the YEAR, M.DC.LXII.



## TO THE READER.

READER,

**I** *T is more than a Year, since it was clamoured, Mr. CROFTON goeth to the Church, and heareth Common-Prayer in the Tower of LONDON: Where-upon he was not little Censured by some, whose Profession of Religion, and Relation to him, required much more Charity.*

*Mr. CROFTON did then write unto me this ensuing LETTER, with Advice to Communicate the same, for the Satisfaction of the Weak, who stumbled (to their own wounding) and Silencing of the Wicked, who insulted, to the Grief of him and Gods Church.*

*In Observation of this Instruction, I did (to save the labour of the Pen, and make this Paper more profitable to the Church) put it into the Press; where some good Friends did seize, and for present stifle it; choosing rather to Communicate the written Copy as they could.*

*This Copy was imparted to many Christian Friends and Ministers, who seemed to be in this matter otherwise perswaded; in special, Those of the Congregational way, who seemed most concerned in the same; these were all requested to Correct Mr. CROFTON'S Errour, and Rectifie his Judgement; but none would, or did undertake the work, though assured he had an hearing Ear: Horresco referens; though he hath teen most bitterly Censured, he never received any, the least Admonition*



## TO the READER.

concerning this matter, one excepted; a Copy whereof, with his Answer thereunto, being come to my hands, I have presumed to annex unto this LETTER.

I presume (without Mr. CROFTON'S knowledge)

First, To make these Papers publick, to evidence the little Cause men have to represent Mr. CROFTON'S Non-conforming Communion, to be a Defection from the Cause of Reformation, and Result of his Temptation.

Secondly, To let men see on what Grounds Mr. CROFTON hath satisfied himself in his solitary Estate, when he could neither Confer with Men and Books; that so if they appear weak, some serious man, may by word or letter (whilst the Press will not be allowed to speak) help him to Conviction; I cannot but determine it unchristian, to condemn without Fraternal Correction, or an Essay for Conviction; those Censures do reflect with Violence on the Censurers, which are retorted with a what doth your arguing reprove?

Thirdly, To help others to discover that Point of Piety which is proper for their places and capacities, under the present Providences of God in, and towards his Church in these Nations.

What lately was Mr. CROFTON'S Case, is now our own; we must either withdraw from the Prayers and Publick Worship of God in this Church, or attend it by this disguised Ministerial Mode and Order; and with Grief I speak it, we are in the dark, and we are left in the dark, our Prophets are gone, who should tell us, and before their going have not told us, how in this Case Christianity doth require us to carry: Some general Cautions we indeed received in their last Councils, but no clear Directi-

## To the READER.

ons in reference to the special Case and Condition into which we are resolved: I well know, most Presbyterian Divines to be in Judgement the same with Mr. CROFTON; but their Prudence doth prohibit the Publication thereof to us, or at least in a particular Specification of our present Condition.

I will not say, Mr. CROFTON by his Act or Apology, appeareth any very wise Pilate, I leave those to whom it doth belong, to judge his skill in the Compass; but I cannot but say, he seemeth to be most Simply Faithful, in fulfilling his Ministry, proposing himself a pattern, and perswading his friends and people to walk in the Exactness of Truth against all Extreame, though his worldly and carnal Interest lieth on either hand, and might easily induce him to advance, or at least by his silence to abett the same. I cannot but observe this is not the first time Mr. CROFTON hath divided from the Policies of them who could not disown his Principles, or Scripturally determine against his Practice: And truly I wish men may consider, whether the Serpent do not out-stretch and over-reach the Dove, in those Policies which make Religion (unto its reproach) a matter of Faction; and study to save, and recover Reformation, by the appearance of a Bulky Party, for Separation? I cannot but let thee know, I am thus far clear of Mr. CROFTON's mind, Unwarrantable Non-communication may not be allowed, no not for a day, though to saving Reformation; for we may not do Evil, that Good may come thereof; and I cannot be perswaded, I am disbanded from Christs Army, so soon as I am superseded to my Conduct; I must march under his Banner, when I may not be permitted to march at the Head of a Company: And sure I am, it is more easie to fall into either

## TO the READER.

*ther Extream, than to walk between both uprightly, according to the Truth of the Gospel.*

*Reader, I will stay thee no longer, only know, That this Season of Publication of this LETTER, is by me chosen, or rather constrained by the over-prudent Superfedeas before mentioned, and silence our over-general Cautions of our pious Ministers in this Case, and houre of Temptation which is come upon us.*

*If any Minister be hereby provoked to beat out the Truth, which must guide the Churches Practice: If any Christian do hereby receive Direction to dispel his Doubts, and steer his Conversation: Or if any rashly censorious Saint be hereby convinced of their uncharitable, unchristian Censures, and bitter words; by which they have wounded themselves, and grieved him whom God hath smitten, be hereby convinced of their fault, so as to give Glory to God, and with Jobs Comforters, confess their Guilts, I have obtained mine End, and hope it shall not much displease my Pastor, on whom, I confess, I have herein too much presumed.*

I am thine in Union with the Church,

Sept. 1. 1662.

And Simplicity of the Gospel,

R. S.

REFOR-



# REFORMATION NO SEPARATION:

OR,

*Zachary Croftons Plea for Communion with  
the Church of England.*

In a Letter to a Christian Friend.

*Christian Friend,*



Onsidering we live in an Age exceeding  
scrupulous; and the actions of a Prisoner  
are subject to Observation and Censure,  
without the least enquiry into the rea-  
sons, end and inducements thereof: And  
well knowing my unhappy self to be a man  
much mistaken and misrepresented; obnoxious to, and  
afflicted with the groundless calumnies of the wicked,  
and censures of the weak: And being deeply sensible of  
the sad doom denounced against such as administer  
*Offence to any of Christs little ones*; and the great damage  
and danger of a groundless offence, *choaking the joy,*  
and curbing the duty of such as take it. *I who have* Mat 18. 6.

B

for more then six moneths been buried alive) do conceive a duty and necessity incumbent upon me, to appear, and (by such utensils as a close and severe imprisonment will afford) to speak for my self, in the cause of God and his Church (charged on my weak hands) in reference to an act, which Conscience doth constrain me to pursue; and (or obtained liberty) to attend. In which I discern some ready to insult, whilst others soon scandalized, beyond what the nature thereof may occasion, to the one or the other; for God (whom I serve in the Spirit) is my witness, I would give no offence, neither to the Jew, nor to the Greek, nor to the Church of God.

The case is this :

Sir *John Robinson*, the Lieutenant of the Tower, did of his own accord (not at that time, though often before, moved to it by or from me) on *Fryday* the thirteenth instant, send me word by my Keeper, That I should have liberty to go to Church, and enjoy the Solemn Assembly, and Publique Worship of God, celebrated within this place (the which on second thoughts he hath remanded;) in the use hereof, I must of necessity attend that Order of Administration, against which I have publickly manifested ~~that~~ that which is *Corrupt and Superstitious*; yet conscience of duty doth compel me to receive and use the ~~same~~ *liberty* (when I can obtain it) as a mercy from God, and favour from men, the which I have often prayed for and desired. Hereupon I apprehend a clamour is sent abroad, that *Mr. Croston* is present at, and attends unto the reading of the *Service-Book*; in which some boast beyond measure, as having gained a Proselyte; whilst others stumble, as if I started from the truth and work of Reformation, and testimony which (through Gods grace) I have given thereunto.

My good Friend, you must know, this clamour is, (as to the fact) as yet false, the liberty being not yet obtained.  
but

but I confined to my *Solitary Sabbaths*; wherein I hope, I can profess; *I am not alone*, because the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is with me: But indeed I must confess it true in (the *first*) my desire, intention and endeavour to procure this liberty, so soon as I can, and my resolution to attend those corrupt Administrations, and this disorderly service of God, until God please to bring me forth, and make me drink the waters of his Sanctuary in purer Vessels: and I cannot but protest, that the one or the other, insulting, or offended at my so doing, may grieve me, and wound their own souls, but cannot say they know me, who was ever satisfied (and so declared my self in my publique Ministry) as to this point: or that I administer any cause for such insultation or offence: Yet to the end Gods dishonor, Religions disgrace; their own danger by this their sin, may (if possible) be prevented, I thought it my duty to signify to you, and require you (as you have opportunity) to communicate to others, these following considerations; as *Apologetical reasons*; for what I am convinced, is not onely lawful, but a positive duty, not without sin to be omitted, though the criticism of our times, and my special case, may require an *Apology* for the same.

*My long, close, and severe durance* (much beyond any other Prisoner in this place) or any carnal, self, *politique* Principle, hath not been the impulsive cause of my desire, or use of this liberty; but (as in my other acts, subject to the censure of men) pure conscience of duty towards God and my own soul; and the preponderant distaste of my judgement: (I hope in some measure also to discern duty in difficult times and conditions) in sense whereof, I desired this liberty the first day I was committed to this place, and many times since; and have often complained of it to God, and such men as came near me, as a defect in the Government of this His Majesties chiefest Prison in *England*, that care is not taken; nor liberty allowed, for

Confid. 1.  
Deliberate  
thoughts,  
not distress  
of condition  
provoke it.



Christian Prisoners to attend upon the publique Worship, and preaching of the Word of God: I have in this respect often preferred the *Compters*; or *Newgate* (more base and despicable in vulgar account) before the Tower of *London*. It cannot I think be soberly (I am sure not charitably) denied, that Christian Prisoners, ought to have Christian liberty and accommodation, in a Christian Kingdom. It is supposed, a Prisoner bringeth with him into this place, some *horrid crime, and notorious guilt*, by reason whereof there is conceived but little between the Prison and death; therefore the hand of Justice which punisheth the offence, ought in Christian pity to seek the salvation of the soul, and (if possible) prevent the Malefactor from dying in, if he must dye for his sin. I have often thought, that if the Heathen indulged *Paul* a liberty to *Preach in Prison*, Christians might and ought much more allow a *Preacher* liberty to *hear* the Word preached in Prison. I hope it will be no offence to minde this Age, that amongst other evils reflected (by such as rose up against him) on the Government of King *Charles* the first, his late Majestie of honorable memory, this was one, and not the least, *Men were detained close Prisoners, without the liberty of using Books, pen, ink, or papers, denying them all the comforts of life, not permitting their wives to come to them; and for the compleating of that cruelty, depriving them of the necessary means of Spiritual consolation, not suffering them to go abroad, to enjoy Gods Ordinances in Gods House, or Gods Ministers to come to them, to administer comfort to them in their Chambers.* Let none therefore dare to censure this act as the result of a distressed condition, or base compliance by constraint of Prison, against the persuasions of Conscience.

Exact Collections, p. 6.

Confid. 2:  
Solemn publique  
Worship positive  
duty.

*Communion with the Church visible, in all acts of solemn publique Worship, is an essential part of the Sanctification of the Sabbath, or Lords day, and positive, indispensable duty of every particular soul called by the name of God; to be onely Superseceded*

*Superseded by a real, inevitable necessity, with assurance to any, that God will have mercy, and not Sacrifice.* This cannot be denied by any, who observe God hath denominated the Sabbath an *holy Convocation*. Synagogues Levit. 23. were on this ground erected and frequented, in all the Cities of Judah; that the Lord Christ, fulfilling all righteousness, and his Apostles in conscience of duty, made it their custom to go to the Synagogue every Sabbath day; that the Apostles and primitive Christians, from the very Ascension of Christ, held solemn Assemblies on the *Lords day*, the first day of the Week, and charged the Saints of their age, and in them all others, *not to forsake the Assembling of themselves together*, taxing the defect of some therein, *as the manner of some is.* Luke 4. 16. Acts 13. 14. & 17. 2. John 20. 19. 1 Cor. 16. 2. Heb 10. 25.

As *Solitary Sabbaths* are in themselves, so (God knoweth) they have been, and are to me, the sting of an imprisoned condition: I hope I can say, without vanity, as David in his exile, *As the Hart panteth for the water Brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God: My soul thirsteth for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God? when I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me, for I have gone with the multitude: I went with them to the House of God, with the voice of joy and gladness, with the multitude that kept the holy day.* I deny not God to be served, and enjoyed in *Solitary Worship*, but must needs observe, in Zion the Saints pass from strength to strength, every one appearing before God. *Solemn publique Worship* is Gods chief Ordinance, for the support of his peoples faith; this is denominated, the *Beauty of Gods Holiness*; To this his presence and power is promised, and chiefly predicated; attendance on this, is charged as his peoples duty, and discharged as their joy: The want of this is the *Sacra fames*, Spiritual famine, under want of which Davids faith was ready to faint, had it not been prevented by a speedy and seasonable supply: *When I sought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the Sanctuary, then understood I their end,*

This

This therefore is not to be slighted, or neglected, or superficially desired, or used; but most highly prized, earnestly desired, and joyfully imbraced, and not voluntarily declined on every light occasion; and trivial exception, or friendly persuasion; but the grounds must be plain, clear, certain, and weighty, such as I may with confidence plead unto my God, as the apology of my absence of choice, not constraint, in which I expect God should have mercy on me, because and for that he cannot have *Sacrifice from me*, which can be nothing but the *restraining necessity* of my condition, or my *running into sin* to possess it.

My good Friend, you see my case is hard; and what now is my case, may ere long be yours, and others of Gods people: You yet enjoy a liberty of worshipping God, in due and right order, and may drink the Waters of the Sanctuary in clean Vessels; long may you enjoy it, and if God take pleasure in me, he will in due time restore me to it; but if not, let him do what seemeth him good. At the present I have no choice; if I will attend Gods *publique Solemn Worship*, I must do it in this place, and order, or not at all; whilst I dread to give the least occasion of insultation to the wicked, or offence to the weak, my conscience is under the apprehension and awe of a positive indispensable duty, which I dare not decline, unless on reasons constituting a clear and unavoidable necessity; my present restraint doth indeed acquit me, and carry the guilt (of my absence from Gods House) from off my shoulders, I duly endeavouring, by all just means, to have the same removed; which once effected, what moral ban will lie upon my minde; and in my way, as a *formal sin*, which I cannot without guilt break thorow? that is the question I have desired seriously to consult, and by Scripture to resolve. And on mature thoughts I must profess I finde not any, which will bear weight in the ballance of the Sanctuary, as that which I shall dare to produce

produce before the Lord, when demanded a reason of my voluntary absence; on which he may not pronounce, *He was bidden to the feast, but would not come, and therefore is not worthy, and hereafter shall not*: For I must profess;

First, I never did, could, or yet can deny, *the being of the Church of England* (that is, the community of Christians in this Nation, incorporated by Baptism, professing the true God and Jesus Christ, and subjected to the Word and Sacraments, in the Ministry of Christ's lawful Ministers (for I never believed any *National Privilege*, such as was peculiar to the Jews, or the *Hierarchical Order*, and collective Constitution (which cannot be denied to be a mere humane and separable adjunct, and is neither an equal, nor regular Representation) could or did give that appellation) nor disown *my own relation to it*; and must therefore see some good ground for my non-communion with it, and for my choice of *Solitary Worship of God*, rather than fellowship in its *Solmn publique Worship*, where and whilest God affords his presence; though with a grieved, striving spirit, I dare not be absent, though thereby I might avoid some burthen.

r.  
The Church  
of England is  
true Church  
and I a mem-  
ber.

It is well known, I am not unacquainted with the *Church-renouncing, rending, ruining principles* of the *Anabaptists*, and old separating *Brownists*, nor with the *Paganizing practice* of the (seemingly more sober and serious) *Independent*, or *Congregationalist*; who sometimes indeed pretend to own the *being of this Church*, but (by their Church-gathering, *Self-Constitution*; dispensing Ordinances by their *self-consecration*; professed principle, that in *England* there is *much matter for, but not the form of a Church*, and so no Church at all, for *forma dat essentiam*; and with the height of confidence (to say no more of it) proclaiming themselves *the gathered Churches*, contradistinct to the Nation, and all Christians in it (as if they onely were the first fruits of *Achaia*, I mean *England*, an infidel

del Nation, who had never received the Gospel, or Christ had not been preached among them, and professed by them, nor any of her Inhabitants had been incorporated by Baptism, into Christs Catholique Body, but were to this day *aliens and strangers to the Household of Faith, and Commonwealth of Israel*) do plainly declare to all rational men (able and willing to discern) that the *being of a Church in England* is by them disputed, yea, denied: But these I never did, nor could approve, and therefore I must presume, none that ever knew me, and my constant contests, by preaching, writing, and suffering under and against them, can conceive this to be now any scruple to my conscience, doubt to my soul, demur to my duty, or diversion to my Communion with them, whose being a Church of Christ, I have ever, and openly asserted and defended, and to whom I have ever professed my own relation.

Prophane  
members  
destroy not  
the Church.

That these men urge, *That many members in the Church of England, are rude and prophane in their Conversation, with their mouthes confessing, but in works denying God, and are not therefore fit matter for a Church*, I do well know, and to my grief and shame do know to be true, and visible, but to my comfort do know to be an Objection of no weight; for our question is, concerning *Communion* with, not the *Constitution* of a Church: That such matter should not at first Constitution have been taken in, and having grown up, ought to have been cut off, and cast out, I can and do yield, and consent; but that the *disorder, defection and prophaneness of the members*, or what is more, the *Angels and Ministers*, hath resolved the Church into a *non-entity*, and necessitated *non-communion*, (save in a new Constitution and Church gathering) I cannot believe, because I finde nothing more plainer in *Nature*, then for a *degenerate Vine*, to retain the name and nature of a *Vine*, when it bringeth forth little save sowre *Grapes*; nor is any thing more clearer in Scripture, then

Mat. 3. 9.



then for the children of the Devil, to have Abraham to their father, and be the children of God, and Covenant of Grace, by visible administration : or for disorderly Christians in Corinth, to be called, and owned as *Saints* and *Believers*, a man covetous, a fornicator, and adulterer, an idolater, a drunkard, to be called a brother; *Sardis* having a name to live, but being dead, is declared one of the golden Candlesticks, among which Christ walketh; and when *Paul* wrote to *Titus*, the Christians in *Crete* were abominable, disobedient, and to every good work reprobate, *Titus* 1, 13, 16. yet was *Titus* charged to rebuke them sharply, not to disown them, or decline communion with them, or to gather the *fit matter*, and orderly Christians among them into a new Church form; nor are any among them advised, or directed so to do; a Ram, and a Goat cannot be denied to be of Christ's flock on earth, though they may be turned on his left hand, at the day of judgment; Correction, and casting out is the privilege of a Church member; and supposeth its capacity in their object, though an *incestuous person*: the prophaneness of the members of this Church may and must provoke my brotherly admonition, ministerial reprehension, and the Churches Censures against them, but will never warrant my non-communion with them, or voluntary absence from Gods solemn publick worship celebrated among them; because it doth not *ipso facto*, by any due order, or divine direction; discharge their relation to Christ's Catholic visible body, so long as God knoweth them as his *Spouse*, and *people*, (though deserving) having not received from him a Bill of Divorce; I may be burdened to see their lewdness and lightness, but must not forsake the Bride-chamber, nor his worship therein celebrated: without all doubt, the capacity of those within the Church (though disorderly, and as such to be judged) is vastly different from Turks, Jews, and Pagans, and those without the Church; who refuse to profess the true God, and Christ, or obedience to them; the one being subjected to Gods special pastoral, paternal care; in the case of their very disorder and aberrations; whilest



the other only enjoy Gods *common providence* as do other creatures, the works of his hands.

Parochial distribution convenient and good.

What hath been urged to nullifie this Church from (what this kind of men will needs suppose to be) the form thereof, *viz.* that they are by *Parochial constitution*, and *Christ never ordained Parishes*, hath been often, and abundantly answered, by many, and among others, I have already fully spoken to it in my *Bethshemish clouded*, and shall therefore now only say, *Parochial distribution* is no *constitution*, nor any *essential form of the Church*; so as that bare simple habitation within such bounds, should *ipso facto*, without further capacity, or qualification make men *Church members*; or their removal, or non-residence within this or that Parish, (as do Merchants and Mariners) should discharge their relation to the Church: but it is a *Political order*, and *convenient distribution of the Church* (*Catholick visible*; to *particular Assemblies*; for the due and more easie Celebration of Gods publick worship; the Lord Jesus founded his Church *Catholick*, and *universal*, into which Baptism is the Ordinance of *Catholick incision*, and *imitation*; and excommunication is the Ordinance of *Catholick excision*, and discharge; but nature, and the necessity of order doth divide it into *particular Assemblies*, according to humane discretion: and no order can more conveniently circumscribe particular societies of the Church, than *vicinity*, and *cohabitation*; This the holy Ghost doth plainly digitate, by denominating the first plants of Christianity, by the *places* where they were planted, not by the first planters, or after Pastors: blaming it as a *Schism in the Church*, to say, *I am of Paul*, *I of Apollo*, and *I of Cephas*; and indeed this distribution doth much facilitate the inspection of the Pastor, or brethren, beyond what the *Covenant constitution* of Congregationalists is capable of; whereby some living in *York* are members of a Church in *London*. *Parochial Division* then being the benefit of the Church, and members thereof in *Christian Cities*, *Countries*, and *Nations*, it is so far from blame and avoidance, that it is to be commended.

Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, and the like.

inended, and approved by men of prudence, and order, and can never necessitate, or warrant any mans non-communication with the Christian Assemblies thus distributed, and conveniently assembled.

Unto such as stumble themselves, and would have others so to do, at Communion with the Church of *England*, because they do not know that it was *rightly gathered*, and constituted at the first; I shall briefly say, History, (the best evidence of an ancient Act,) doth assure us that the Gospel was first preached, and Christianity was first planted in our Islands by the Apostles, or Apostolical men, which (no doubt) did with all care, rightly lay here the right foundation of Gods Church, and if we may (as in cases of this nature, we must) judge (a posterior) the certainty of the root, by the extent, and quality of the branches; the foundation by the Dimensions and duration of the Fabrick; can any man reading the *English* Stories of the eminent Martyrs of Christianity found in this Church, in all ages, since the times of the Apostles unto this day, and not conclude the Church was at first rightly planted, and founded? these men shall do well to resolve the old question ever put by the Non-conformists to the Brownists (these mens progenitors) if they be begotten to God, in what Church, and by what Ordinances were they converted? was it not the Church of *England*? we (whom they to serve their designe, will own as Saints, and declare fit matter for a Church,) must profess our selves sprouts from this plant; their Charity is not sure so irrational, as to believe men may gather *Groves of Thorns*, or *Figgs of Thistles*, for if so, their gathering Churches will be found needlesse, whilest Saints grow in *Infidel soils*, and Gods house existeth without the laying any foundation.

These men shall do well to consider, whether the knowledge of the mole and order of first planting and gathering the Church, be necessary to every member related to it. In *England* we finde societies professing the true God, and Christ; baptized into his name, worshipping him

*England*  
Church was  
rightly con-  
stituted at the  
first.

Knowledge of  
a Church its  
first constitution  
not necessary

by his own Ordinances ; this is the *forme of a Church* ; and doth suppose and imply a *Root and Foundation*, by which it is animated and preserved ; But must we needs know how it was at the first laid, or planted ? though by length of time it is worn out of sight, and over-grown with earth and weeds ? are we bound to renounce the *Vine*, and run out of the *house*, unless we pluck up the *root*, and raze the foundation to satisfie our selves herein ? if so, God help the illiterate souls, and weak capacities not capable to conceive, or well understand the same ; is Christs Church planted for an age only ? that every succeeding generation must transplant ? gathering of Churches did indeed begin the *Acts of the Apostles* ; must it needs be continued to the end of the *Revelation* ? to the coming of the Lord to judgment ? I finde not *Paul* in his *joyning himself* to the Church, nor *Priscilla and Aquila* in their travels, and communion with different Churches, make any demurre on this enquiry ; and I dare not think the holy Ghost would have concealed from us a point of so great importance.

My good friend ; upon the whole of this Objection, I must let you know that my serious and deliberate thoughts do dissent from the Conclusions concerning the *matter and form of a Church*, stated by the *self-consecrated Officers of the hundred and twenty self-constituted gathered Churches*, which of late years met at the *Savoy* : but assent unto the determination of Mr. Cotton in his advice to the brethren of old England at the close of his way of the Churches in New-England, (*viz.*) *The work is not to make them Churches, which were none before ; (for the Gospel having been preached in England by Apostles, or Apostolical men, they were without doubt rightly planted) but to reduce them to the Primitive purity they had in their first constitution.*

And (here my friend,) I must desire the Independents will not be offended, that I propose them as the present prime promoters of the *nonentity of the Church of England*, by way of barre to *Communion with her*, and a principle of  
separa-

*separation from her* : for that (notwithstanding their contrary professions of what they cannot soberly, charitably, and rationally deny) their common suggestion in *England*, is *fit matter*, but not the *form*, (which is the esse) of the Church; their *Savoy conclusions*, and paganizing Church-gathering practice, do loudly proclaim them the off-spring of the *Brownists*, and posterity of the rigid *Separatists*, ever withstood by the sober, and serious Non-Conformists, since *Englands* Reformation : and in this point the *summum genus*, of those several, ipsefical, self-constituted Sects, which have confounded our Church; the odium of whose Schism from it, defended by Rebellion, Schism, and horrid Treason is at this day most sadly (though falsely) reflected on the most loyal, sober, serious, reforming, non-conforming Presbyterians; to the weakning their hands, and retarding, yea diverting their progresse in an humble, argumentative, and patient pursuit of Christs Ordinances, and due authority of Christs Officers, to be restored, and exercised in the Church of *England*; by me ever owned, and now lamented, but not to be deserted.

Such as fancie the Church of *England* was lost in the deluge of *Poperie* and *Antichristianism*, may by their own obervation correct the same; and be constrained to confesse, there is in this respect no more cause of stumble as to the entity of this Church, then was as to the being of the *Jews*, when overspread with Idolatry, in their many defections from God; for in *Englands* worst times they may finde a persecuted *Elias*, a *John Wickliffe*, with many other most eminent branches, bringing forth the Clusters of Gospel Grapes, to the bleeding out their very lives, besides *Obadiah's* *fifties* hidden in Caves, by the violence of persecution; certainly the *Rot* must abide, or how, or whence could these branches spring? Yea, the winter storms of *Poperie* passing away, and the floods of *Antichristianism* allwaging, though not dried up, and the chief weeds of superstition being plucked up, though some remain; how hath this

*Englands*  
Church lost  
not its being  
in Popery.

Ser. 3.

this Church revived, flourished, and sent out many most eminent and pious branches, without any new plantation? Yea, conveyed unto themselves (who question her being) the truth of Grace, and Faith in Christ Jesus, if ever they receiv'd it? I blesse God I have learned to discern between the subject, and its separable adjuncts though never so vile, and do believe the Church to be Christs Church, though vitiated and defiled with *Idolatrous administrations*; all, nor indeed any defection is an actual divorce; if *adulterous Judah*, on a summons to repentance, do return, and put away her abominations, she loseth not her relation to God; nor doth the high places continued under his reformation, make God or his people to forsake her; the Temple of God abides his, when given to be trodden under the feet of the Gentiles: yea, when the Antichrist the man of sin, sitteth therein; this notion may possibly sound better to some eares from *New-England*, than from the Tower of London; let it therefore be thence receiv'd; If Antichrist must sit in the Temple of God, and the Courts of the Temple be given to the Antichristian Gentiles for a certain time to tread under foot, then there was a true Church state where he sate, and whilest he sate there, and it was the true measured Temple, whose Courts he did tread under foot, nor can there be Antichrist, unlesse there be the Temple of God and Courts thereof, where he is; and if ever Antichrist sate in England, then there was the Temple of God there; before he sate in it, and whilest he sate in it, as was also in other reformed Churches, the Temple or Church is the subject wherein he must sit; the Antichristian seat is not the subject, nor constituteth it, but is an accident vitiating the subject, and separable from it; the removing therefore of Antichristianity, doth not destroy the subject, or make it cease to be; but changeth it into the better state, in which it was before thus accidentally vitiated: this is the assertion of Mr. Phillips of Water-town in New England.

England was Christs Church before the Antichristian deluge,



*deluge*; under the power of Popery; and since it was purged out, and so she at this day (notwithstanding her backsliding) doth abide; God provoked hath not yet removed his Candlestick, or given her a bill of divorce, as he justly may, and I fear yet will, if I then deny Communion with such of her assemblies, I have a liberty to attend and frequent, and make my appeal to God on the account of her *non-entity*; with a Lord she was not, or I know her not to be the Church and Spouse, my heart would condemn me in the guilt of a *notorious lye, groundlesse, and uncharitable Censure*, and so make my *wilful solitary devotion*, exceeding sad, because exceeding sinful.

Secondly, I hitherto could not, nor yet can, conceive the corruptions of the Church of *England* to be a sufficient ground, or warrantable barre to my *non-Communion* with her solemn assemblies in her publick worship.

I do not say that *Separation in all Cases is unlawful*, I well know Christians are called out of, and separated from the world, in their first accession to the Church of Christ; but this is not our Case, who (do as is before noted) own the Church of *England* as resolved into that capacity: I know also *separation from Babylon* the seat of Antichrist is a duty, directed and charged by the Lord, on all his people; and unto this also the Church of *England* doth professe, and cannot be denied to have attained, and therefore stands distinct from the one, under the Epithite (*Reformed*) as well as from the other by the Appellation (*Church*): to as that I dare not deeme *England* the world, or *Babylon*, (those objects of a serious, sacred separation, and non-communication) to both which she is found contradistinct.

That there are in the Church of *England* (especially in her present relapsed estate) *many and grosse corruptions, grievous to the Spirit of God and his people*, calling for the zealous admonitions, and most faithful rebukes of his Ministers; is alas! too too legible, and apparent, to be denied by any; yet, (when I consult the Scriptures) I cannot but find

2.

*Englands corruptions not sufficient bar to Communion.*

*Separation from the world and Babylon allowed.*

*Englands corruptions paralleled with Israels and others.*



finde as great (yea if possible) greater corruptions in those whom God, and his people, owned as his *Church*, and *Spouse*; and yet separation, or voluntary non-communion, was never practised, advised, or indulged, but the contrary thereunto.

Prophanenesse  
of Ministers  
& Administration.

Will any object unto us the prophanenesse of the Ministers, rudeness and disorder of the ministration of Gods worship, we yeild it is too visibly true; but more vile administrators, or irregular administrations cannot be, than were the sons of Eli in their service; who made the people to loath the offerings of the Lord, and were rebuked, and described by *S. mael*, in *1 Sam.* 2. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord, and the Priests custome with the people was this, when any man offered Sacrifice, the Priests servant came while the flesh was in seething, with a flesh-hook in his hand, and he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or Caldron, or pot; all that the flesh-hook brought up the Priests took for himself, so they did in Shilo unto all the Israelites that came thither, also before they burned the fat, the Priests servant came and said to the man that sacrificed, give me flesh for to rost for the Priest, for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw; and if any man said unto them, let them not faile to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth, then he would answer him, nay, but thou shalt give it me now, and if not, I will take it by force wherefore (by this horrid disorder defended by violence) the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord, and in verse 23. it is reported that Elies sons lay with the women that assembled at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation: O horrid uncleannesse, most heaven-daring villany! yet I find not that any God-fearing-Israelite forsook the Sanctuary, or durst forbear their Sacrifice; nor did Samuel (who reproved, and denounced Gods judgment against this prophanenesse) ever advise, or direct the same: the Scribes and Pharisees in the dayes of our Saviour, said, but did not; laid heaوية burdens

*deals on the people, which themselves would not touch with one of their fingers; they under pretence of long prayers, devoured widows houses, they would neither enter into heaven themselves, nor suffer such as would; yet the Lord himself who reprov'd them, heard them, and charged his Disciples to hear them, because they sat in Moses seat; Let it be observed and remembred, the Authority may, but the quality of the Minister doth not adde to, or abstract from the entity, or efficacy of Gods Ordinances, he may preach to my salvation, who is himself a castaway.* Math. 23

1 Cor. 9. 27.

Do any object the *preaching false doctrine; publick reading the Apocripha as part of Gods Word; innovations in worship, polluting Gods Ordinances, or injustice in discipline; I shall neither deny, nor excuse the same: only say as the Apostle Peter to the Church in his dayes, there were false Prophets among the people, even as there are false Teachers among you; the true Prophets of God in Israel,* Corruption in Doctrine and Worship.

*were ordinarily confronted by the false; there wanted not an Hannaniah, to break the Yokes of Jeremiah; nor a proud Pashur to put him in the Stocks, in the Gate of Benjamin, when he only declared Gods mind, warned of Gods approaching judgments, and withstood the perjurious breach of the Oath of God, which was upon the King, and Kingdom; nor is any thing more plain, than Israels setting their posts, by Gods posts; their Altars by Gods Altars; setting up in Gods house the very Image of Jealousie, insomuch that Gods Prophets were ordinarily invective; and vehemently reprovng in their Ministry; and indeed extraordinarily raised up to that very end; yet we find (not in all their Calls to Repentance) one Caution against Communion with the Church, or Call unto separation: In the dayes of our Saviour, the Jews were so corrupt in their doctrine, that he cautioned his Disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, they made the Word of God of none effect, by their traditions of the Elders; they enervated the Law by most* 2 Pet. 2. 1.

*frait and false interpretations thereof; In worship they innovated, and with great severity imposed, their own Inven-* Ezek. 8. 6.

43. 8.

Mark 8. 15.

7. 3.

tions, Pharisaical Rites, and Superstitions: they prophaned the Temple, and made Gods house a Den of Thieves; and in their Discipline they made acts of Necessity, Charity and piety, censurable unto a casting out of the Synagogues; against all which the whole Ministry of the Lord Jesus was highly invective, and severely rebuking, yet he neither disowned them as a Church, denyed communion with them, all his time on earth; or directed any of his Disciples so to do, so long as God continued his presence and Ordinances to and among them: but on the contrary pleaded for them (as the very fountain of Salvation) in opposition to the Samaritans, *You worship you know not what, but we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews*: he sent his cleansed Lepers to shew themselves to the Priests, and offer according to the Law of Moses; confined his Ministry and Apostles to them, till after the vaile of the Temple was rent, in token of the expiration of their worship and departure of God; accounting them children, and all others dogs; and charged the Disciples to hear them who sate in Moses seat; under all their God-provoking Church annihilating corruptions, he neither practised or prescribed a non-communion or separation; And in all extreams, I desire to make him my pattern, and walk as he walk'd, who never went astray.

John 4. 22.

1 John 2. 6.

Prophadefs of  
members, and  
disorder in  
Ministration.

1 Cor. 5. 1, 2.

10. 21 11. 20.

21. 14. 26.

2 Cor. 12. 20, 21

Do any stumble at the prophanesse of the members, and the neglect of corrective discipline, rudeness and irreverence in the use of Gods Ordinances, confused method, and the disorder of popular acclamations in publick prayer, and other acts of worship; I wish I could say these stones lay not in their way, or that they were in my power to remove them; but I think they run on a much greater Rock, who run out of Gods Church, or from solemn publick worship because thereof: for the Church at Corinth was greatly corrupt, and provoked the severity of Apostolical reprehension; and that once and again; there being amongst them incest not to be named among the Gentiles, and an heaven-daring ostentation in it, instead of correction of it; a participation with the table of Devils, by their attendance on the Idol-

*Idol-feasts of the Infidels; a rude and debaish drunken Communion at the Lords Supper, intermingled and confounded with the Love-feasts: intollerable disorder in their publick Assemblies, all speaking at one and the same moment, their very women not keeping silence; and that in different matters and tongues, everyone had his Psalm, his Prayer, his Revelation, his Prophecie, his gift of Tongues, (in all which respects they were more confused than our popular acclamations) and constrained the Apostles to check them, by the nature of God, as a God of order, and not of confusion; in all these the Apostle advised, and endeavoured with all authority a Reformation, but not separation, or non-communication, nor transplantation into a new gathered Church; I cannot imagine he would make Schism from the Church, a signe of a spiritual, who judged Schism in the Church an evidence of a carnal mind.* I Cor. 3. 4.

Do men complain (as they have cause) that some Roman Rites, and order was retained, when this Church was reformed; let them consider many pious Kings of Judah, have their reforming governments stained with a but the high places were not taken away, but the people went thither to worship: yet I finde not that any God-fearing Israelite, who loathed those Reliques of Idolatry, ever barred themselves because thereof, from Gods Altar and worship. Rom. Rites.

My very soul is grieved to consider Englands back-sliding, Indulgence of erroneous Doctors and doctrines, formality and lukewarmnesse in Religion; yet when I observe that Ephesus who lost her first love, Pergamus indulging the doctrine of Balaam, and the Nicolaitans, Thyatira suffering the woman Jezabel, who called her self a propheteesse to teach, and to deceive Gods people; Sardis having a name to live, but being dead, and Laodicea, Englands Counterpart, so lukewarm that no good is spoken of her; by all which these Asian Churches were rusted, and therefore reprov'd by the Lord, yet not rejected; but represented to the world as the Starres he held in his right hand, and golden Candlesticks among

among which he walked; I dare not disown her *relation to God*; disclaim *mine own relation to her*, nor voluntarily decline *communion with her*.

Corruptions  
are not all a-  
like.

My good friend, *all corruptions in Gods Church and worship*, are *displeasing to God*, and *disfastful to his people* imbracing the simplicity of the Gospel; but *all corruptions* are not alike in *operation, quality, and extent*, nor of a like *influence on Gods Church and worship*: consider therefore some corruptions are *substantial*, and *intrinsic*, vitiating the *very subject*, and so *universally spread through the worship of God*, that it cannot be used without sin; others are *circumstantial and extrinsic* to the same, *vain, needlesse appendants*, superadded by mans will, but which notwithstanding Gods Ordinances remain entire, and *exactly his*, and may be used without participation in the affixed corruption.

Corruptions  
substantial and  
intrinsic.

Some corruptions incident to Gods Church and worship, I say are *substantial and intrinsic*, (not arising out of Gods Ordinance as the genuine product, and effect thereof, but) *entering into the very body of the Church and substance of Gods worship*, as a Spider into wine, or venomous Worme into an Apple; so as to *vitate the subject*, (that it cannot be used with safety) and *nullifie the very Ordinances of God*, that it *alters their very nature* to the loss of their efficacy, and transmit certain *destruction* to such as sit under the same; yea, which is done either by changing the *matter*, and retaining the *essential constitutive form*, as by a solemne regular cutting off a Dogs head, or offering swines blood, instead of a Lamb, or a Kid; a baptizing (as some have done) by fire instead of water: or retaining the *matter*, but changing the *essential forme*, as did Jeroboam, and the Samaritans worshipping the true God, by the *very Sacrifices*, and in the *very order* himself appointed; but before *self-devised Symbols*, Calves to the one, and the Dove to the other, in a self-appointed place, Dan and Bersheba to the one, Mount Gerizim to the other; and by *self-consecrated Priests*, the lowest of the people, and so departing from the Temple in Jerusalem, Gods Ark in it, and the Tribe of Levi



*Levi*: all which were essentiall to the form of divine worship: and thus did the *Corinthians* eating and drinking at the Idol Sacrifices, which the *Apostle* severely corrected, with a (*ye cannot partake of the Table of the Lord, and the table of Devils, ye cannot drink of the Cup of the Lord, and the cup of Devils;*) and by pointing them unto the essentiall form of the Sacrament, the *Cup of blessing, which we blesse, is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ?* and the *Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the body of Christ?* Of this nature is Baptism, by a *Midwife*, or any other private hand, though with *water*, and in the name of the *Father, Son, and holy Ghost*; or by *water* and a lawfull Minister, but in the name of *God the Father of all things, and Truth the Mother of all things*; as I have read some have done.

1 Cor. 10. 16.

Corruptions extrinsecal, and circumstantial are Ordinances *superadded unto*, and so concomitant with, or conversant about Gods Ordinances; but enter not into, nor do vitiate their subject: the which (these notwithstanding) doth exist in *matter*, and *essential form*, perfect and entire; capable of due operation, in their own course and nature; as stinking fish doth nourish; or water puddled, or in an unclean vessel, doth quench the thirst; and these are either some matter *superadded*, (not intermingled with, or destructive to Gods Ordinances, such as were the *high places, posts by Gods posts, thresholds by his thresholds, Altar by his Altar in Israel*, unto the very *Image of Jealousie* set up in Gods house, which yet remained his; and as such was continued, preserved and acknowledged. The Lord Jesus found the Temple his *Fathers house of Prayer*, though made a *Den of thieves*; and such is our *Crosse in Baptism*, though seemingly sacramental, yet distinct from Gods imitating Seal of the Covenant; and such is a *Roman linen vesture* in ministrati<sup>o</sup>n of Gods worship by a lawfull Minister; or some *corrupt, rude and unsutable ministerial method and order*, (which is the vessel, and only instrument of conveyance though unclean) of *administration*: such was the *vi-*

Corruptions  
extrinsecal and  
circumstantial.

olent,



olent, and unsuited snatching of the Priests part of the Sacrifice, by the sons of Eli, the confused acclamations of the Church of Corinth, speaking all at once, different matters, in different tongues; and our imposed method, disorderly method of publick Prayer, by Versicles, Responds, abruptions, abbreviations and popular acclamations, with artificial singing by boyes, and base fellows thereunto appointed: under all which Gods Ordinances abide a subject comp'eat, truly, and formerly existent, and distinct from these super-added corruptions; operative unto salvation; and therefore may not be declined, or disowned.

Corruptions *intrinsecal*, are indeed such as do not only warrant, but necessitate non-*communion*, yea separation of the highest nature, as a duty indispensable: In fence hereof all those in Israel who feared God, and set their hearts to seek the Lord, prayed for, and (according to divine directions) departed from Dan, and Bersheba, forsook the solemn Assemblies Jeroboam had constituted, and followed the Tribe of Levi, Gods only Ministers, unto Jerusalem, Gods only place of publick solemn worship; and our Saviour resolved the woman of Samaria her enquiry concerning the place of worship, with a (ye know not what ye worship; for salvation is of the Jews: This is the very ground of the Reformed Churches departure, and non-*communion* with Rome; who though she be (by original constitution) the Temple of God, is become the very seat of Antichrist; and by the same so vitiated that her Ministrations are the cup of abomination by which she hath made the Nations drunk, having (by her intercessions of, and to Saints, the Popes infallibility, divine power and properties, and by her expiatory Sacrifices) disowned, and nullified (as much as in her lieth) Christs mediatory offices: and (by dividing the elements, destroying the outward signe, essential to a Sacrament, and on a fancied transubstantiation, turning it into a Sacrifice for quick and dead) nullified Christs Ordinances: and (by many other *intrinsecal* evils) poisoned Gods whole worship, and rendred it directly destructive to salvation; and is

is therefore presented to us under the Appellation *Babylon*; in the very abstract; *spiritual Sodom, and Egypt*; and to the object of our *departure*, advised, with *(a lest ye partake of her sins: which were and are so universally diffused, and hath so farre vitiated the subject, that a guilt will be contracted by meer Communion.*

Corruptions extrinsecal may, and must grieve the spirits of Gods people; occasion their loud complaints, his Ministers most zealous reproofs, and the *find out endeavours of all, to prevent and remove them*; because *scandals to the Church, prejudicial (though not directly destructive, to salvation) dishonourable to Religion, and the God (whose prerogative it is to prescribe every pin, and the very snuffers to be used in his House,) and is therefore highly displeasing to God*; provoking him to *rend a Kingdom from the house of David, to loath, and at least to leave his holy place, and remove his Candlestick from such as will not fear him in the simplicity of his own institutions*; without the vain and needless Appendants of their own inventions: But yet there can be no warrant *separation or voluntary non communion*, because the Church abideth related to God as *his Spouse*; his worship and Ordinances remain for matter and essential form *entire, and exactly his own*; notwithstanding the concomitancy of some super-added matter; or the unfit ministerial method, and order by which they are dispensed; and Gods presence is to them *continued*, (though with a grieved, striving spirit, threatening his departure) and thereby we are *under a possibility of salvation*; (though engaged to more care and industry) this was the case of the Prophets, our Saviour and his Disciples, the Church of the Jews, and Primitive Christians, under the many parallel (yea transcending to ours,) corruptions, before mentioned, without any prescript, or practice, of Separation, or Non-Communion.

Christian Friend, it is too evident, That *many and great Corruptions are to our sin, and shame retained*; and to the aggravation thereof (with an high hand, and defiance of the God of Jealousie) *returned (after a Solemn and Sacred Expulsion)*

Extrinsecal  
corruptions  
warrant no se-  
paration.

1 King. 11. 34.

The Case of  
England under  
corruption,

Expulsion) *into our Church*; but yet they are *extrinsecal*, and not of the *substance of Gods Worship*, which for *Matter*, and *essential Form*, remaineth *entire*, and *properly his own*: (though not so acceptable) *under, as well as without them*; and will not therefore warrant my Separation, or Non-Communion, so far as to lie at Home, or loyter in the Church-yard, until the Common-Prayer (whereby God is *truly*, though not *orderly*, invoked, and worshipped; wherein I (as a Member of that Church) *am interested*, and unto which, as it is *Publick Solemn Prayer* (though in an unsuitable Method) my *Amen* is an indispensable Duty) being ended.

Ezek. 34. 18,  
19, 20, 21.

The *Administrations* of Gods Worship among us, are indeed *nauseous*, and *unhealthful*, but not *void*, or *venernious*; our waters are *bitter*, and *puddled*, but not *poisonous*; our Pastures are *trodden down*, and the proud of the *Flock* do *push us with Horn*, and *with Hoof*; but we are not yet driven out of *Christs Fold*, nor dare not we say our *Pasture* is quite taken from us: To be plain, Under all our Corruptions, we must not, we cannot, we dare not deny the *Matter*, and *essential Form* of Gods Ordinances and Worship, is continued to us; though some superstitious Rites are unto them annexed, which are apparent Appendants, redundant to, and separable from, and not *vitiating*, destructive, or annihilating to their Subject; and are therefore pretended and professed (by the Canons appropriated to this Church) to be *Acts of Order and Ornament*, rather than of *Worship*, and *Adoration to God*; and they are such wherein the people are generally *passive*, not *active*. Baptism is *fully* and *formally Gods Ordinance*, though the *Cross* be needlessly, and superstitiously added thereunto; and the *Parent* (by virtue of whose interest in Gods Covenant, the Child receiveth the Seal) is unjustly excluded; and a deputation of *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*, is groundlessly imposed: *The Word of God* is not excluded, though now and then, a piece of *Apoporipha* is unwarrantably read in the publick Assembly; nor doth it cease to be the Word of God, because it is *unfitly mangled*

mingled into parts and parcels, unduly fixed unto places; unreasonably appropriated unto dayes and times, and published in unseemly vestures and voyces. I confess their Common-Prayer is my burden, by reason of its defects and disorder, and the rudeness of the Ministerial Method. I stand convinced, it ought to be altered; yea, abolished, by reason of its Symmetry to the *Romish Mass*, superstitious Order, and unsuitableness to Solemn Publick Prayer; yet I must confess, I find in it no Matter to which (on a charitable interpretation) a sober serious Christian may not say, nay, can deny his (*Amen*;) And though I distaste the Ministerial Method, I cannot disown in it the essential Form of Prayer; (viz.) A calling upon God in the Name of Christ. That Set-Forms of Prayer are used, is an Act and Argument of weakness; that they are imposed on Gods Church and Ministers, is an Act (I cannot acquit) of wickedness: And that this defective disorderly Form, is retained, yea, by force returned into the Church of England; I fear will be found an Act and Argument of wilfulness against Gods mind; yet neither the one, nor the other, maketh it cease to be Publick Solemn Prayer; nor do I see on what ground I can deny, or refuse my (*Amen*) to what is prayed for, because I know there are many things wanting to the Church, which are not, nor indeed can be by this Form expressed; or not joining desires to God with (and as a Member of) his Church, because they are rudely and unfittingly expressed; whil't the irregularity of that common Order, is no Bar to Gods acceptance of my more regular (*Amen*) thereunto given.

Departure from Babylon, is the indispensable Duty, and will be the property of all, whose names are written in the Lambs Book of Life; but the Object must be Babylon in the very abstract; Setting the mark of the Beast on them who partake with her, bearing in her hand the Cup of Abomination, and so appearing to be formal Spiritual Egypt and Sodom: I cannot believe every or any Society retaining some Babylonish Rites, Vestures, and Orders, with a protest-

Surplices and  
canting quie-  
ring, singing  
boys and men.

See the Epistle  
to the Liturgi-  
cal considera-  
tor considered.

Rev. 13. 8. 171  
4. 13. 8.

ed and apparent *recession from Babylon*, can be the Object thereof; and the last of these, is the *capacity of Englands Church*: Certainly the *Temple of the Lord* is not to be disowned, or renounced, because it hath been sometime trodden down by the *Antichristian Gentiles*, and vitiated by the seat of the *Beast*; when these are expelled, though the dirt of their trappings, and stink of their session remain behind them: My good friend, let it be seriously resolved, is there no difference between *Israel* and *Judah*? *Rome*, and a *reformed Church*? a *professed sacrificing Priest*, and a *Minister of the Gospel*, fondly affecting and retaining that *Appellation*? between a *calling on the only true God*, in the *name of Christ*, though in a defective, rude, confused, and unfitting order, and praying unto *Saints* and *dumb Idols*? between the *disorderly administration of the worship*, for matter and form, *Gods own appointment*, and the *Ordinance nullifying administration in an unknown tongue*, to which the hearers cannot say *Amen*? and *abstraction*, or *alteration of the Elements* beyond, yea contrary to *Gods prescription*, or what the possibility of nature, and entity of the ordinance will admit? between *Sacraments* with some unwarrantable superstitious Appendants, and a *Sacrifice expiatory for the quick and dead*? must we depart from *Israel*, returned from *Egypt* and *Babylon*? though retaining the favour, some of the Manners and Customs, and an hankering mind to go back unto those accursed places? I pray God keep *England* (in her now retrograde motion) from going back to *Rome*, then (through his Grace) I shall not dare to renounce her *Communion*, though my soul mourn for her corruption: for so long as we enjoy in her the very matter, and essential form of *Gods worship*, and *Ordinances*, though in an humane, unfit, corrupt ministerial method and order, with some vaine and needlesse appendants of humane invention; we are not without confidence of *Gods presence*, and a *possibility of salvation*; and we therefore are without a sufficient ground for *separation, or non-communication*.

Consid. 3d.

Thirdly, let it be considered *Communion with the Church*,  
under



under many, and great corruptions, is not inconsistent with zeal, care, and contest for reformation thereof: the designs of Hell may agree in the end, but disagree in the means; but it is not so with the determinations of Heaven; the Devil may suggest and provoke the correction of sin, by sin; or make zeal to purity a spur to separation, and the shiprack of virtue to, and in the Church; he can make the white Witch heale, what the black doth hurt; by him one Conjuror doth blesse, what another doth curse; the Angel of light doth often expel, and lay the Angel of darkness; but yet they be both evil Angels; he sticks not at, nor stirreth against Piety, or Religion, provided it be but sinful; he is content men go in a *via lactea* & *sacra*, to the place of woe; and steere by Conscience (if erroneous) to their own condemnation: but it is not thus with God, and the dictates of his holy Spirit; all his commands are *competible*; his Graces *concatenated*; All the duties of a Christian are to be discharged without *interfering*, *interruption*, or *destruction* by one another; he alloweth not one *sinful step* in the way of salvation, though paved with never so fair a *pretence of sanctity*; if therefore his people stumble thereinto, they must return and go back, if they will go to heaven; no one duty, at any time damps zeal unto another; they may be *desparata*, but never are *opposita*, different, but not contrariant one to another, the *discords in true Religion* do ever constitute the clearest harmony, all extreams are equally odious unto the God of order; excesses finde no more acceptance with him, than defects in Religion; *be not righteous over-much* is a divine dictate (though many times unduly, and unjustly pleaded by men) as well as *be not over-much wicked*, Gods Israel may not turn to the *right or left hand*, departing from the way of his Statutes: the true Christian must walk in all *well-pleasing*, in every good word, and work, and hate every evil way: It hath been a scandalous Blasphemy (from its very first being) of Christianity, to say or suppose it doth direct its subjects to do evil, that good may come thereby: sincere Saints are ever acted by the Spirit of

Communion is  
no bar, but a  
help to reformation.

1 Cor. 11. 23.  
14. 15.

2 Pet. 1. 5, 6;  
7.

Ecc. 7. 16, 17.

Deut. 5. 32.  
17. 20. 18. 14.

Col. 1. 10.



Rom. 3. 8,  
Reformation a  
duty.

2 Chro. 13. 9.  
10, 11.

Numb 16,

2 Sam. 2.

peace, and love, to seeke and zealously pursue, the  
purity of Gods worship in union with his Church,  
zeal, care, and contests, for Reformation of Gods Church,  
and worship, subjected to the least corruptions, can never  
be denied to be the indispensable duty of every Christian :  
It is true, these are to be expressed and acted by all lawful,  
and only lawful means, according to every mans place and  
capacity; the most dreadful shakings of Gods Arke, will not  
warrant Uzza to step out of his place to stay it; nor will the  
greatest sanctity in Israel, authorize Chora to usurp the  
Priesthood: It is not a more poor apology, than base, for  
the rebellion of Dathan, and Abyram, that all the Lords  
people are holy; the God of holinesse needs not, nor will  
he endure the help of our iniquities: these Cautions obser-  
ved, endeavours for reformation can be by none omitted, or  
faintly pursued, without an inevitable contracting upon  
themselves the guilt of those corruptions, which remain up-  
on Gods Church and service; for no rule (in reference to  
humane society) is in Morality, or Divinity more true than  
this error, *cui non resistitur approbatur, veritas non que  
non defenditur opprimitur, negligere quippe cum possis de-  
turbare praveos, nihil aliud est quam fovere, nec caret  
scrupulo societatis occulta, qui manifesta facinori cum po-  
testat definit obviare.* Error not resisted, is allowed, for si-  
lence gives consent; Truth not defended, is oppressed, for,  
Cowardize giveth fallshood the Conquest, to neglect when  
we can do it, to disturb the wicked, is to cherish them, for  
concealment and indulgence is the guard of their designe,  
nor can he want a suspicion of secret conspiracy, who can,  
but will not hinder iniquity; for such Connivance is an act  
and argument of affection: let it be remembered old Elies  
sin, by which he fell under the severity of Gods wrath, was  
his not reforming the abominations of his sons; The Re-  
forming Government of many pious Kings of Judah, are  
blotted, with a but the high places (which the Temple re-  
stored and frequented seemed not worth the heeding) were  
not taken away: Israel is charged with the prophanes of  
Gods

Gods Sanctuary, by reason of the *uncorrected neglect* of the *Ezek. 44. 7. 8.*  
 Keepers thereof, and the *non-resistance* of false Prophets, is  
 aggravated with a (*the Prophets prophecy lies in my name,*  
*and the people love to have it so;*) It is a matter of admiration  
 to a God of jealousy, that his Church and worship  
 should be overspread with corruption, without the rebuking,  
 and exhortations of an Advocate for him; *the Lord saw* Jer. 5. 31.  
*it, and it displeased him, that there was no judgment;*  
*and he saw that there was no man, and he wondered that* Isa. 59. 16.  
*there was no Intercessor;* the guilt of the incestuous person  
 is by the neglect of discipline, charged on the Church of  
 Corinth; and the suffering the woman Jezebel, is the evil  
 imputed to the Church of Thyatira: the light of nature, and  
 Scripture leadeth every one in his place and capacity to re-  
 form corruption, and chargeth it on their conscience, as a  
 positive duty. 1 Cor 5.  
 Rev. 2. 20.

To damp zeal, or barre endeavours for reformation,  
 and to blame, and violently silence Ministerial rebukes,  
 and argumentation, or popular petitions, supplications, mur-  
 muring and murmurations, under and against the corruptions  
 of Gods Church and worship, is irrational, and irreligi-  
 ous; and the defence thereof by this plea (*viz.*) these cor-  
 ruptions are confessedly consistent with salvation; and such  
 which notwithstanding the most serious and zealous repro-  
 vers do not, and profess they dare not separate from, or  
 deny communion with the Church; is no other than hellish  
 divinity, and Bedlam Reason, best confuted by their wives  
 rebukes of the Queene of Sluts preparing her mistress  
 sack possets in the common washbowles (not to mention a  
 vessel of more base employment) or presenting to the table  
 his dainty Cates in a dish licked by the dog, and wiped  
 with her dish-clout; the which though it be unhand-  
 some, and unwholsome, is not poysonous, and so directly  
 destructive, as to drive them the house or table; so as to  
 begge or starve, rather than to eate or keep good fellow-  
 ship: such as shall thus do, must needs proclaim themselves  
 ignorant of the reprovng invective Ministry of the Pro-  
 phets,

Joh. 2. 16.

1 Kings 11. 31.

Ezek. 43. 8.

Zack. 14. 20.

1 Cor. 14. 33.  
40.

phets, and Apostles; yea, of the Lord himself, when and whilst they lived in Communion with the Church of the Jewes; the last of whom whipt the money-changers out of the Temple, when and because he acknowledged it, his *Fathers house of Prayer*; *insensible of the sad and severe judgments of God on Eli and his sons for their uncorrected disorder*, which made Gods people loath the sacrifices of the Lord, when they did not, nor durst leave his Sanctuary, and on Solomon for building high places, though consistent with the Temple of the Lord; and on Israel for building their posts besides his posts, their Altars besides his Altars, and setting up the Image of jealousy in the House of the Lord, which yet was not forsaken by him or his people: and unaffected with the nature and holiness of God, who will have holiness written on all the vessels of the Sanctuary, and the very bridles of the horses; and will have all things in his service done decently and in order, because he is a God of order, and not of confusion; when Corruption in Gods Church and worship can be denied to be sin, I will allow and advise Gods Ministers to be silent; and when they grow substantiall, and vitiate their subject, I will allow and advise the Members of the Church to separate, but till then I dare not give my consent, or Countenance unto the one, or the other.

Seperation no  
act of Reformation, but ob-  
structive there-  
to.

Reformation and Seperation (whereof voluntary non Communion is the privative part, and the first formal act) though (by the groundless Calumny of the enemies to the one, occasioned by the rash inconsiderate zeal of the other) they are confounded, are in themselves vastly different, and indeed inconsistent, and destructive each to other; as much as is the Cleansing, and casting away a vessel; purging, and parting from an house, this is duty, but that is horrid iniquity; schismes in the Church are dangerous, and disgraceful, but schismes from the Church, is thereunto destructive and damnable to the subjects thereof; the purity of Gods Worship must be pursued in unity with the Church; and Communion is implied in all endeavours for  
Reforma-

*Reformation; desertion doth declare destruction; not repair of the house is desired, and designed; which of us leave our houses because not so convenient, handsome or healthful as is desired? or forsake our food because of a slovenly Cook or Carver? the Scripture doth detect much corruption in Gods Church, and the zeal of many unto the Reformation thereof, provoking and pursuing it unto death, or very deep distresse, without the least direction unto, or allowance of separation or non-communication; but with a most plain and clear charge and direction to the contrary; Christs Apostles, (as most zealous Reformers) did often, and openly, and with much authority rebuke and resist the disorder of the Churches, and corrupt administration of Gods worship, yet were so farre from approving or advising separation, that they have branded the subjects thereof, with these and the like odious epithites, they were not of us, and therefore went out from us, these are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the spirit, and taxeth the voluntary non-communicants with a defect, forsake not the assembling of your selves as the manner of some is. I cannot without trembling consider, the circumcised Sects in the Church of Colosse, are charged to have left the head, by leaving the body, in which all the joynts are knit together to the nourishment of the whole; I cannot but assent to that maxim as most true, ex Ecclesia nulla salus, the Church is Gods Arke of salvation, out of which none but mad men will leap, or leave it, on pretence of purging it, or putting out of it unclean birds and beasts: in this case of contest for Reformation, and communion with the Church under many and great corruptions; I must say as our Saviour of the Iesser, and more weighty matters of the Law, these things ye ought to have done, and not leave the other undone; for Superstition and Separation are extremes equally odious, and ominous to Reformation; is it not obvious, to every wise observer, that the Devil and wicked men, do make the one the advantage of the other; and cast the odium, and direct the force of each (as the turn cometh, and opportunity serveth)*

John 2. 19,  
Jude 19.  
H.b 10. 25.

Coll 2. 19.

Luke 11: 42.

serveth) against such who (steering by Scripture Compasse) desire (according to their capacity) to guide Gods Church, and themselves in her, between these two dangerous Rocks into the Haven of rest and holinesse.

Whilest poor despicable I in our late years, in my place and Calling, withstood our *Church-wasting separation*, many professing piety, and pursuing purity in Gods House and Ordinances, were (prejudiced (unto an high and open persecution of me) by their own fancy that I *asserted and advanced the superstitions and disorders of our Church*; by the return whereof God hath convinced them of their rashnesse, and constrained them to correct their mistake of his unworthy reproached servant: and now God (blessed be his name) having *animated me with zeal for perfect, and compleat Reformation*, and acted me in my place and sphere (as a Minister of the Gospel) to debate the obligations thereunto, beyond my mean abilities, or the logical reply of the adversaries thereof; (who bear away the victory by a *thou lie'st Bellarmine*; and have confuted me *argumento baculino*, enforced by the severe moderation of authority; incensed by the suggestion of Treason and Sedition secretly whispered, and generally charged against me, whose loyalty is most legible by both active and passive characters) and who have in all the writings which bear my name, declared my abhorrency of Sedition and popular tumults,) and having blessed me with an heart, and opportunity to withstand and witnesse against the deluge of Superstition and Corruptions, which breaking over, and bearing down sacred banks, doth (to our sin and shame) again overflow our Church and Nation; how many do now dream I will indulge, and embrace *Separation*; or at least by my *voluntary non-communication* (the first act thereof) give some countenance unto it? as if between these there were no *medium*; but that the *corruption of the one*; must necessarily generate the *other*, give me therefore leave to tell you, and by you to tell others (in me concerned) I cannot but withstand the *one*, with abhorrency of the *other*; and keep my distance from *separation*, whilst



whilst I desire and endeavour, to stave off *Superstition*; lest I Shipwreck my self, or others, on either rock; I have observed, and our Church hath experienced the same; that a *Superstition, Corruptions and disorder in Gods house and worship* do (and therefore call for the zeal and rebukes of Gods Ministers, and carefull Remedy by his Majesties Prelates, by him entrusted with the Ecclesiasticall good of his Subjects) very much barden men of strong affections, and weak Judgements to separate, furnishing them with a clamourous accusation, who discern not the proper and genuine cause of their sinfull Shisme, but readily father, (what the Apostle hath determined to be) the brat of their own lust, on any thing which beareth relation thereunto; though but a remote, and accidental occasion thereof: so non communion and separation, is the grand Removal, and most Plain ruin to reformation, that ever could be devised: Subverting the house on pretence and instead of sweeping it; as if an house forsaken, and pulled asunder (one running away with a post, another with a beam, to patch up their own self-founded fabricks) were ever like to be purged, and preserved from uncleanness and disorder: (my good friend) take notice of this; God determined, and his people deserved the destruction of the ten tribes of *Israel*, before those who feared God fled from among them, or forsooke them. *Babylon is fallen, she is fallen*, was the voice uttered by the Angel, before, *Come ye out of her my people was founded to the Saints which follow the Lamb*; *Conservation is the end of burdensome Communion*, and carefull Reformation; but dissolution is the most certain sequell of desertion; It is Gods and must be his peoples last work to depart from and forsake his Sanctuary; he staves long with a grieved striving Spirit: and stands on the very threshold, with a wooing expostulation, *Be thou instructed O Jerusalem*, *Jer. 6. 8.* least my Soul depart from thee, and I make thee desolate: (the very issue of departure) let it be seriously resolved: did not Corab in his separating from the Camp of *Israel*, gathering a Congregation out of the Congregation: and the Circumcised Sectaries among the primitive Christians, strike

Superstition and separation strengthen each other.

1 Cor. 9. 3;  
4. Gal. 5.  
19, 20. 21.

Jer. 13. 2. 7



at the foundations, and seek to subvert the very societies from whence they separated? and do not the practices, and some principles of the semi-separating (as they would be deemed) selfe constituting Independents of our age, determine a non-entirety, by the non-formality of a Church in England, and raze the very foundation thereof, and so condemn the very generation of the just, who have lived and died members thereof, yea Martyrs to the truths of Iesus Christ, against Papall, as well as Pagan power and errors? The Anabaptists in Germany have not been more odious, and obstructive to Luthers reformation; then the Church gathering separatists of all Sects have been retarding unto a retrogradation of that in England: in that the odium of their schisms seconded with *sedition*, and centred in *Rebellion*, un o *Regicide*, with the confusion and subversion of our Church and King 'om, is (most sadly and shamefully, though unjustly) imputed to all, who with humble and peaceable spirits, desire, and endeavour the casting out *corruption and disorder*, from Gods house and ordinances; and reflectes on the work of reformation it selfe, as if their proper genuine and natural parent.

Reformation must be by lawfull means  
 The reformation of the Church is a duty incumbent on every man and member thereof; onely it must be pursued in their places and capacities, by just and lawfull means without schism from, (or if possible) in the Church, or sedition in the Common-wealth, both which my soul ever did abhor as disgraceful to Religion, dishonourable to God, and destructive to Reformation: I never did, nor yet can allow, or advise other means of reformation then Ministerial admonition to the Church, Logical dispute, and Theological argumentation, and redargution among equals; humble proposal, petition, and supplication to superiors with a patient, and submissive attendance on their pleasure and on God acting the same; such as receive Kings as *visiting Fathers* to the Church, will rejoyce in them as *Christians*; much more

as *professedly reformed*; and with all peaceable *submission*, embrace such degrees of Reformation of the extrinsecall order, and ministerial method of Gods worship (enjoying the substance in the essential form thereof) as they will allow, untill God encline their hearts to allow what himselfe expecteth, and his people desire: soberly pursuing the *bene esse*, with joy in the *esse of Religion*, and in *communion with the Church*, waiting on the truth of Gods ordinances, quietly attending their Superiors for purity and regularity of dispensation; I find not that the men fearing God in *Judah*, did tumultuously tumble down the high places, nor turn away from Gods Temple because of them; yet their standing was the stain of Government to their reforming Kings, to flye out of Gods house, or in the face of Gods Vicegerents, because his own appointments are administred by instruments in order to his service unsuitable, and to us offensive, is a frowardness which God cannot nor will not admit, or indulge in any of his children. Ministerial reproofs and admonitions, and vulgar mournings and murmurations, are loud alarums to God and the consciences of men, and strong enforcements of Reformation: *preces & lacrymae* ever were and still are the onely weapons of the truly Godly, under and against the oppositions of just authority, and lawful Princes, such as God hath in his mercy, and by his miraculous providence restored to our Church and Nation. I am afflicted by, and ashamed of the slow progress, and shameful retrogradation of Englands Reformation, under and against publicke, national, solemn, sacred bonds (whose obligation will abide before God, and conscience, though the affirmations thereof may be interdicted by men) If *Calvini* in his days could say, (*If Godly Religion had flourished in England till this day (the time of Queen Mary her Reign) there ought to have been an order of service better corrected, and many things quite taken away.* Can we without grief consider our Church hath enjoyed true Religion more then eighty

Our state  
and time  
calleth for  
a higher  
degree of  
Reformation.

Epistle to  
the Ch. at  
Frankford

years since that time: and yet we ignorantly continue, and violently contend for that order of service, as if ashamed to give place unto better things: yet, I dare not deny her to be a reformed Church, or as such, decline Communion with her: in, and for whom the Lord hath eminently appeared: and out of whom he hath graciously purged all things *venemous* and *destruative* (though some things *nauseous*, and *distastfull*, were continued, and are returned into her) having defended her against the Spanish Armado, and Popish Conspiracy by Gunpowder, and other agitations, and attempts of Papall power and Antichristian rage; with an Almighty hand and outstretched Arme. I do beleive the *infancy* of Reformation might rejoyce in, and grow up under that order of *divine service* which the *adult* estate thereof ought to cast off, as puerile and unsutable: First degrees were matter of *Comfort*, though not of *Content* to such who seek the simplicity of the Gospell: *remaining dreggs* ought to be discharged, and I doubt not God will (notwithstanding mens avernesse, and opposition) in due time effect it: In the mean time, I see no reason, to refuse to drink because my waters are pudled or presented in an unclean Vessel, and I can come by no purer: remaining degrees of Reformation must be so purified, that those obtained, may not appear to be *disowned* or *despised*: though our order of Divine Service be a *Roman dregge* of some dangerous distastfull influence, yet it is not *Poperie*; shall we not blesse God, and rejoyce in England as brought out of *Babylon*, though some *Babylonish Vestures, Rites, and Orders*, which ought to be abandoned, are yet retained? I conceive them ingratefull for the *purity* obtain'd, who run out of Gods house, for the *Corruptions* continued, and obtruded: I cannot but repute them over forward, who shall refuse the *Substantials* of true Religion, and Christs Institutions, because of some rude *Rough Appendants*: shall we not acknowledge Gods mercy in affording us, and humbly use the truth of Gods word because transmitted unto us with some humane traditions? and the substance of his own wor-  
ship

ship celebrated in a disorderly way, and method, with some foolish Appendants, of mens inventions? (My good friend) my zeal, care and contests for Reformation of this poor Church, have cost me dear: yet (if God suffer the Charge to rise as high, as did that of my namesake by the unkindness of King *Joash*) not one mite too dear: I blesse God however my passions worke, I see no cause to repent my bargain: I pray God glorifie himself, and edifie his people by my bonds; onely I must professe to all that fear God, I see no sufficient cause to satisfie my Conscience, or to plead before my God, on which to refuse Communion with her, and attendance on Gods solemn publique worship under her rude Ministerial method; for that duty is not warantably superseded by the iniquity of another man; my sufferings, nor other mens sin, (under which I mourn, because I cannot mend it) must not turn me out of Gods way, to the right or left hand; superstition, and separation, must be shunned as Rocks equally dangerous to Gods Church and worship: the prophaneesse of this and its Subjects must not drive me: nor the pretended purity and piety of the other, and its Subjects allure or draw me unto the positive evil of separation, or privative evil of voluntary non-Communion; I pray and hope God will keep me upright under, and against all temptations, from falling into the extreame of our unhappy age and Church; and yet give me to see the purity of his worship in Union and Communion with his Church here on earth; or possesse me with his undefiled, unstained glory in Heaven; for from the one I dare not depart untill I arrive at the other; least by shipwarck I should be deprived of both.

Fourthly, Let it be considered, Scandall is an argument of no Conf. 42.  
 strength, when pleaded to supersede or condemn a positive duty: *Jobs*  
 friends, (like miserable Comforters) were no little Scanda- offence no  
 lized, that he would not from his Crosse condemne himself as argumenz,  
 wicked; nor brand himself with Hippocrisy in his past piety, in this  
 to which they laboured to compell him, by a right Theo- case.  
 logical, rather then Logical argument. (though not fully  
 asser-

- asserted) they that plow iniquity, & sow wickedness, reap the same; sorrow is the fruit of sin; yet Job well knowing the same; *Job. 17. 4.* Prosperity of the wicked, and that God trieth the righteous, would not let go his integrity; Nor to justify them, would he let his lips condemn himself, but made his appeal to God his witness on high, and record which is above; who interposing to moderate the Question, discovered their fallacy and determined they had not *Mark. 2.* Spoken of him the thing which was right, as did his servant Job; The Jewes were offended that the Disciples plucked the ears of Corn on the Sabbath day (appointed of God for rest) and that our Saviour on that day healed: yet our Saviour mattered not their offence as of any weight, but justified the facts by the positive duty of preserving mans natural life; If the *L. ke 13.* Circumstantial of the first Table must give way to the Substantial of the Second table of the Law; and if obedience to humane, must give place to Divine command, and authority; much more must the offence of a brother, vail to obedience to the will of God: In pleasing men, God must not be displeased: every man must therefore please his neighbour for his good to edification. but to please a brother by omission of positive duty (which is formal, fearfull iniquity) is (by sinfull strengthening his prophane-  
ness, or Error) *Rom. 15.* edificare in Gehennam, to edifie both to Hell, from which the Lord deliver me. Scandal is indeed an argument of more weight (when duly and fitly pleaded) then to be slighted or superficially evaded: not to offend a weak brother, is charged as a duty: we who are strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves! Its good not to eat or drink, nor do any thing whereby thy brother is stumbled, offended or made weak, are Divine directions and Gospel rules: fearfull is the sin of a Willfull Scandal, for that it is not onely a snare by which a Brother is entangled, and laid on the rack of a Scrupulous conscience, and tortured between his own doubts, and the contrary practice of the pious professing obedience to Gods will, But also a stumbling-stone, occasioning to him certain sin; by either acting under his own doubts and against

against his own apprehensions induced by the bare example of another, or by uncharitable censuring his brother, in what is to him lawfull, and without his own liberty and power to do, or not to do it; this is therefore represented to be the *destruction of the work of God*: against *Rom 4. 20* this sign our Saviour hath denounced a most sad doom, *Whoever shall offend one of these little ones, it were better for him a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the Sea*: the dread hereof hath seized on my spirit, in my present state and Case, that though it become lawfull, could I without sin withdraw from public solemn worship, in an unfitting order, I would on sense of Scandal do it, Scandal is of force, and fully pleaded to supersede or condemn an action in it self indifferent, and so within a mans own power to do, or not to do it; for or against which the conscience may be aw- scandal is ed by a seemingly religious reason; such was the obser- of force in ving, or not observing a day, the eating or not eating of things in- some kind of meats, or meats offered unto Idols; and the like different. things, which in the Primitive Churches, and times of Christianity, the Apostles (during the honourable obsequies of the expired law, which had sometimes, and yet seemed, to charge them as duty, or forbid them as iniquity) determined, indifferent, and directed Scandal of the weak as the casting graine in the æquilibrium minde of a man (satisfied in conscience) as to the doing, or not doing the same; thereby guiding us in all things and cases of the like nature: for the indubitate Universal, *Eat, drink, or any thing that may Scandalize, offend, or weaken a brother*, advised in *Rom. 14. 21*, *Rom. 14.* must be restrained to this species, and things of this kind: For what is positively forbidden, or commanded, must not at any mans pleasure be done, or left undone: simple scandal hath no strength. To lead we are offended, and not produce a reason, at least seemingly religious, is a most simple plea: Jesus Christ, is a stone of stumbling and a Rock of offence to many; and yet he must be preached and pro-

*1 Pet. 2. 8.*



professed unto bonds, and death it self. Such as in my case pre-  
 tend scandal and offence, I must advise and intreat to re-  
 flect their thoughts, and take heed they do not mistake the  
 case, and mistake the question, and thereby take offence,  
 where none is given: I confess the ministerial order and meth-  
 od of publique worship and prayer, is purely humane, with-  
 in the power of the Ministers thereof, and so indifferent, and  
 ought not to be prescribed or imposed, when it is as in our com-  
 mon divine service rude, confused, and disorderly, its no less  
 Scandalous to the serious Golly, then was the administration  
 of the Sons of Eli, or confused acclamations of the Church at Ge-  
 rinth; and such on which if I out of choice, at liberty to  
 enjoy a more serious and regular order, (according to the  
 Kings gracious Indulgence granted in his Royal declaration  
 concerning Ecclesiastical affairs,) should attend, I could  
 not but give offence to such as seek the Simplicity of the  
 Gospel; and seem to them to allow, what I have concluded  
 ought to be abolished, and to build again what I have endea-  
 voured to destroy: for extirpation of every thing which is  
 evil (though but extrinsecall, and in the ministerial meth-  
 od of Gods ordinances) being the extent of zeale, and duty  
 of every member of the Church to be endeavoured in his  
 place and calling, (though however not under a special,  
 solemn, sacred obligation thereunto,) non-attendance on  
 that order unto, and by embracing of more regular admin-  
 istration of the same ordinances in Communion with  
 the same Church, is the least *As* I could do to the enfore-  
 cing that end; I cannot beleive the pious *Israelites* would  
 have brought their Sacrifices unto the Sons of Eli (whose  
 order made them loath the offerings of the Lord, which  
 they durst not withhold) if they had enjoyed other Priests  
 who would have offered more conformly to divine appoint-  
 ment. But my friend, this is not my case or Question, but  
 whether solemn publique Worship, which is my positive duty  
 unto the sanctification of the Lords day and as I am a  
 member of Christs Catholick visible Church, and cannot  
 by reason of my confinement be enjoyed without my at-  
 tendance

tendance, on that Irregular unsuitable method, and confused order: may be warrantably superseded, and omitted on this ground and reason, my presence at such administrations is offensive to some weake Brethren zealously affected to the simplicity of the Gospell, were these corruptions abstracted from, or opposed unto Gods worship, there were to me no case of C<sup>o</sup>nscience, but they are confounded with it, as the unclean vessel, or ill favoured carving with my food whereby I live) and therein I must profess it satisfieth not my conscience, nor seeth to me to be of weight, that I must offer my sacrifice, though by the loathsome order of *Elies* sons, or go to the Temple, though my way lye by the high places, or assemble and send up my prayer in Gods sanctuary, though the *Image of jealousy* be set up in it, cannot be soberly denied; nor ought any to be thereat offended; and I must needs resolve in the affirmative, for the superadded vanities do not void Gods ordinance: nor will defect and disorder, (with which my private capacity is not charged) discharge my positive duty; I am not insensible that some will be ready to read my allowance of the same, in my attendance on it, unto the hardning of themselves in sin, or hindring themselves in duty, concluding, *Communion in the ordinances* is a consent unto the order: to such I must say at their peril be it; this scandall is taken not given; this inference is more than the promises allow: the Communion of the Prophets, our Lord Iesus Christ and his Apostles, with the Churches in their time under their many and great corruptions, was not, nor logically could be interpreted, to be an argument of countenance, and approbation of them, or abatement of the zeale against them; nor did they thereby contract on themselves the guilt thereof; the spider which diffused in wine, doth vitiate its subject and make it destructive by the very act of Communion, doth spread his dirty webbs all over the Vine, and we eat the grapes thereof, without the least of doubt, or danger: the Cities that suffer by all unfit matter in their

publike ministrations, attend the good instructions, and assent unto the due propofals, petitions, or demands, rudely uttered by their Recorder: nor think they themselves concerned in the broken, blunt, abrupt style, or confused indigested method of his discourse: the extrinsecal adjuncts, and ministerial method of Gods ordinances, is charged on the *Ministers*, not members of Gods Church: it may indeed add grief or pleasure to the people, but voyds not the matter of Gods worship, or leaveth any guilt on them, who thereby receive, and celebrate it, but do not approve the same: the spider may indeed suck poyson of the grape, and wicked men may make my duty an occasion of their iniquity: but neither the one nor the other giveth thereto any proper casualty: events, accidentalls are no arguments against my duty: these are not more damnable to them, who infer them, then they would be to me: if I by reasons thereof decline my duty: my own sorrow, nor other mens sin, must never stave me off from positive duty: these stumbling stones and scandalous inferences, do, and will ever lye in my way to Heaven: yea to my natural life: Christs sheep must drink, and may be hurt by puddled waters: witho<sup>ut</sup> participation in the polluting puddling guilt only chargeable on the Pastors, and proud of the flock,

Ezek. 44. none can be offended that I worship God, in the solemn publike worship of his people: nor can without wounding their own soul be offended that I do it in this order. (to me distastfull not to Gods worship destructive) untill my liberty doth manifest it to be an act of choice, not of chance: if any hence infer and enforce a persecuting constraint, and say *these men may be compelled to that form of service they will not choose*. I shall grant it: but advise such to sit down and consider how this will sound in Gods eares: or how themselves will like it to be confined to *unclean vessels, and order, because they can but will not chuse in such to eat their meat*; The offence of any who are Godly will be my trouble, and their sin: but the omission of duty though  
but:

but for a day will be my transgression, as I dare not admit that, as a reason of this, and must advise it be not pleaded.

Fifthly. Let it be considered in steering this course, using this liberty, and holding Communion with this very Church, under these very corruptions, and by attendance on this very order of service, and solemn public worship: *I am not without the caution and conduct of the sober, godly, learned promoters, and pursuers of a perfect and compleat reformation: the reformed Churches beyond the Seas, and in Scotland obtained higher degrees of reformation, and more purity of ordinances, then did England (for power and dominion the chiefeft reformed Church) yet these never did disown, or decline Communion with her, nor advise any her Members thereunto, yet they did often rebuke and complain of her lukewarm hesitation in the degrees of reformation obtained, and retention of those corruptions which ought to have been expelled among our selves: Tindall, Hooper, Ridley, Latimer, Farrar, Whitaker, Cartwright, Baines, Sibbs, Preston, Rogers, Gere, Mr. Iohn Ball, Langley, Hind Nicholls, with many others, the non-conformists of Lincoln, Devon, and Cornwall) besides those of our present age, and yet contemporary with us) all eminent Divines, and Holy men, groaning under these retained corruptions, praying for, perswading, and pressing after (unto many and great sufferings) a progress in reformation, (unto the pure primitive paines and simplicity of Christs own institution) yet lived unto their last breath in constant Communion with our Church, attending Gods ordinances under these very disorders and irregularities: and did in many things administer according to the form then & now imposed, and did disast the non-<sup>Confid. s</sup> communion of such <sup>This practice is not without prudence</sup> who loytered out the time of publicke prayer, because prescribed and confused: and by press and pulpit pleaded against the separations of Brown, Barrow, Iohnson, Canne, and their separating followers, and adherents, or*

non-communicating abettors; as inferring that from the *English Liturgy*, which it would not allow; these good men with zeal reproved the many *Superstitions* continued: but still denied them to be any sufficient ground for *separation*: from which they ever kept the greater distance, as subverting the very foundation of the Church: and have plainly trodden this tract, in which we must travel, pursuing the purity of worship in Union and Communion with the Church.

I shall not fear to professe, these good men are the patterns to me proposed, (next to the prophets, our Lord Jesus, and the Apostles) and cautionary boights for the guidance of my zeal for the perfection of *Reformation*, against and past the dangerous extremes of *Superstitions*, *disorderly administrations* of Gods ordinances, and *Church-rendring religion*, *subverting separation*, nor am I herein sensible that our case (because our capacity is so) is different from theirs: onely I wish it to be observed, the difference is graduall not Real, it lieth on the *measure and mode*, not in *matter and Substance*: they were bound to endeavour an *extirpation* of the *same evil* but not by so strong an obligation: They were in the *infaney*, we are in the *adult estate* of *Reformation*, and must therefore esteem the *puerilia*, which were their pleasure our shame: The nature and quality of the *Corruptions*, with the necessity of their *expulsion* were by them *under dispute*, it has been determined, and that by an Authority (sometime reputed just) and (whatever it will do in politics) will in point of conscience yet abide a dispute as to its lawfulness: they were entangled in the snares of education, and under the insensible yokes of unseasonable subscriptions of *approbation* of, and promise to *administration* by this *rude order* and confused method: whereby the conscience was awed, and the credit of Religion engaged them (by a burdensome groaning spirit) to bear what they did not see how they could regularly be released from: from all which we are free, and most strictly tyed by contrary obligations: but neither they

nor

nor we might out of our places and Capacities attempt a Reformation by any sedition in the Republique, or sinfull Schisme from the Church: Non-communication is no more warantable to us under the strongest bonds to reformation: then it was unto them without them: because it is an evil in it self: The nature of the (retained, returned) corruptions were the same to them, they are to us, but to neither a justifiable reason for Non-communication: The administration of these good men in, and by this corrupt order, I can better excuse, then justifie, or intimate: I beleive *extirpation* to have been their duty as it is mine: and I see not how I may act, (though I as a private member may and must attend, assent and give my (Amen) unto right matter, in that order and method with those corrupt Appendants I am bound to extirpate: (*Abstinence* from action being the least, and first act of *extirpation*) in which the private Christian is passive, purely passive, necessarily passive because he cannot enjoy or attend Gods worship in this indispenceable duty of holy convocation without it: I beleive the ministerial method of publique worship: to have been subject to their Judge: ment, and within their power as *Ministers of the Gospel* and *Stewards of the mysteries* of God himselfe, full and formall Judges of the mode and order of dispensation (not belonging to or charged on the private members, and objects thereof as to me: In both which respects (besides that special capacity, in which I conclude all the Ministers of our Church now stand by that special obligation which the transactions of providence in our unhappy times brought u, on us, and our posterities, and successors: I have else where professed (and must still profess it, as the result of my most serious and deliberate thoughts) I can keep *Communion* under that form of worship, whereby I cannot administer and heartily say *Amen* to the Master of those petitions which are put up in an order so confused preposterous, and indigested, that it seems to me to be so much below the gravity of the Church, whose mouth I must be, the seriousness of the office whereby I minister, the sanctity of the duty I am to perform, and the sacred nature of the object to whom they

Epistle to  
Considera-  
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are presented, that I dare not stand between God and his people with the same; I presume no man will or can deny my capacity as a Minister, to differ from the capacity of a private Member, and barr me against, or bind me unto, what the capacity of a private member of the Church doth not barr against or bind unto: *non-administration* may subject me to a suspension of my Ministry, when *non communion* cannot be warranted nor excused; the restraint of that must not run me upon the sin of this: I must (with the pious Israelite) leave my sacrifice before the Lord (though with my souls abhorrence of the prophane preposterous order of administration) when I dare not with violence snatch the fat of the sacrifice, and act according to the method of the sons of Eli: I must not leap out of Christs fold, nor leave his pastures, when trodden down by others, because I dare not present his sheep with puddled waters: in the one I am passive by other mens sin, in the other my action maketh the sin mine own: Gods substantial worship must not be slighted or refused, because the sinful order of men attend it: *Strait is the gate, narrow is the way which leadeth to life*: whilst I flee from the sin of my Ministry, I may be, and must take heed I be not split by flying into the sin of a Member of the Church: that guilt may be charged on me in the collective body, which I must be innocent of in my personal capacity; where the Constitutions of men include, the righteous judgement of God will distinguish and discriminate; all particulars are included in an universal defection, but do not perish by it: God will not forget to mark his mourners under Israels abominations in his worship, which they could not mend nor avoid: his *Josua's* and *Caleb's*, who follow him fully, shall not fall short of the land of promise, though all Israel fall in the wilderness.

Ex. 9. 4.

Numb. 14

Confid. 6.

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Sixtly, Let it be considered, my communion with this Church under these corruptions is not more consonant unto the example of these good men of our Church, and the carriage of other reformed Churches, then unto my self, who am (and I hope through divine Grace shall be) *semper idem*: ever since I knew any thing of Religion, and in any measure discovered the ways of God and his people, I have grieved for, and contested against the corruptions of his Church,

but

but avoided, abhorred, and opposed separation from, yea a non communion with it, as the much greater evil; though palliated with professions of piety, and pretences of purity, to the seduction of the simple: such as have sate under my ministry (now clouded by a righteous God) reveiwng their notes, and reflecting their thoughts on what I preached) will find a series of rebukes and admonitions against separation and non-communion, though enticed by men seemingly the most holy, and pretences unto the greatest purity and sanctity: In the last Sermons that I preached from *John 4. 22.* from our Saviours practise and pleading for the Church of the Jews, opposed to the Samaritans, I affirmed, *Communion with Gods Church under many and great corruptions is not only lawful, but an indispensable duty;* the which I amplified by shewing the different nature of corruptions, as *nauseous* and *venomous*, prejudicial to health and growth, or directly destructive, as *intrinsecal* and vitiating to the subject, or *extrinsecal* and conversant about the same; notwithstanding which the subject remains the same, participation in which contracts guilt (as in offering sacrifice to an Idol) or contracts no guilt to the Communicant (eating in an amicable friendship what is offered to an Idol) such as put us out of a possibility of salvation (the only ground of separation) or are there with consistent, imposed by others, and so their sin not sufficient to bar our duty: all which were applyed to the *Popish administrations*, nullifying Christs Offices and Ordinances, and so necessitating separation, polluting by participation: and *Englands corruptions* grieving God and his people, but preserving Gods worship in the substantial matter, and essential form thereof, and so no: sufficient to supersede communion: If you look into the writings which I have bear my name in the world, you will find separation, because of corruption, condemned by reasons, beyond what the most serious Church-gathering Separatists ever undertook to answer, otherwise then by rage and reproach (the dialect of restrained lust in that, as well as in this revolution): Read at your leisure my *Bethshemesh* clouded: *Saints zeal against sinful Altars: Virtue and value of Baptisme*, written many years since,

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some 7.

some 4.

years now

past.

since, and you will see Mr. *Croftons communion with the Church of England*, is not repugnant to his judgement, more then *seven years* since declared, and in those very writings lately published (before and for which men have (by Gods permission) brought my light under a bushel) you shall find my zeal for Reformation consistent to *union and communion with the Church*; nor did the force of opposing corruption drive me (as I might probably have done) to let fall any expressions in favour of *separation*: My logical casuistical Contentions for Reformation, do very plainly condemn, and protest against schisme and sedition as thereunto destructive, particularly in my *Anaptyxis* to Doctor *Gaudens Analysis*, my Argument and Answer is thus concluded: *Whatsoever shall be the establishment in the Church, though never so corrupt, yet whilst consistent with salvation, though it may occasion to me suffering, and a suspension of my Ministry by Gods Grace, it shall not effect on me, or such on whom I have influence, Schisme from the Church or a resistance of his Majesties just Authority*; And in my Epistle to the *Liturgicall Considerator* considered (in which I urge my apprehended grounds for the alteration, and abolition of the *Ministerial* method of solemn publique prayer used in our Church) with a protest for *Communion* under it, though against administration by it. I am so much affected to the peace of the Church, that I have of late preached, what (God assisting I am resolved for to practise (*viz.*) that many, and graet corruptions in Gods worship are to be grieved for, and patiently groaned under, before Schisme be consented to, or separation be consulted: *Provided nevertheless I be passive, not active in them? I can keep Communion under that form of worship whereby I cannot administer and heartily say Amen to the matter of those petitions which are put up in an order so preposterous, and indigested, that I dare not stand between God and his people with the same*; The liberty that I now pursue; (when obtained and used) is no more than a practice commencing on these professions, whereby they are made more legible, not more censurable than they were before.

My good friend, These things considered, I must profess, when ever God shall mollifie the hearts of men, into whose hands he hath given my present liberty; I see not any reason (that I dare plead before the Lord, or reflect as a barre on my Conscience) whereupon my solitary Sabbaths may be sweetned, and spent with comfort; my passage to the publique assemblie and worship, though in this order, and with these appendants which are burdensome to my spirit, standing open; and so my abience being a voluntary act within my own power; If any man professing the fear of God, can produce any, I should be glad, for I fear to be charged with the omission of Gods publique worship, celebrated in Christ his Church, though with extrinsecal corruption, and in a rude Ministeriall order, which ought to be reformed; but will not excuse me, though unforced, by the offence of some weak brethren zealously affected to the purity of Gods House and Worship.

I am not insensible, that the Committee of discretion, will be no lesse ready to call me *fool*, for steering this course, than they were for my entering the Lists, in defence, and enforcement of Reformation, wherein I am deserted by my more prudent brethren; ) for that I hereby strike off from that party, on whom my former contests did seem to turn me; But to them I must breisly answer, I am willing to be *wise as a serpent*, and resolved to keep *my innocency as a dove*, so long as these do correspond and agree, I have an heart to lodge them; but if *prudence* once obviate or obstruct *duty*, or *guide* into, or *guard* sin, I fear the *serpent* begins to wind too farre, and getting in the head, will wind in the body, and devour the *dove*, that some who have been objects of my opposition ( because subjects of separation ) have in my present sufferings embraced me, and shewed kindnesse to me and mine, ( beyond some more specially charged with it, as their more particular duty. ) I am very sensible, and thankfully acknowledge to God and them; and hope they

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did not thereby designe to *charm* my zeal against what I ever conceived to be sin, I confess it hath been a check to my comforts, to consider, some triumph in me and my sufferings, because opposed to the superstitions and prophaneſſe, (which they dislike) who agree not with me in those positive truths, which I have asserted; and will be turned in their hearts against me, when the same two-edged-sword in my weak hand, shall be constrained to strike their more civil, seemingly sacred lusts; The *Usurer* huggs, and hath the Preacher home to dinner; when he preacheth against the prodigal profusal spending drunkard; who will hunt and hurry him out of the Parish when he shall preach against *usury*: I cannot but tell you a passage which here befell me; In my close confinement three persons, full of seeming zeal to piety and purity, stumbled into my chamber, and saluted me with this salutation, *we are strangers to you, but in conscience of our duty are come to visit you as a sufferer for Jesus Christ*; to which kind and Christian salutation I returned a short admonition that we might endeavour to understand the truths of the Lord Jesus, and labour to agree in positives, for I feared many rejoiced in my sufferings as negative, and against what is grossely evil, who would not embrace the truths I did contend for; on which these persons zeal boiled over into this angry Taunt; *what I warrant you, you are yet for the Church of England; and your parish Churches?* to which I could not but Reply by way of advice, *not to deny the being of the Church; nor renounce union and Communion with it, because of the corruptions in it; but their zeal brake into rage, and railing, thou Antichrist, wilt thou yet uphold the Beast and Whore of Rome? are you Antichrist still?* with many more invectives and expressions of outrage, which provoked me to give them this short farewell, *Friends, reconcile your selves to your selves, am I a sufferer for Christ, and yet Antichrist? if you come not to visit me, come not to vex me*; to all dissenting friends I cannot but by way of thanks

thanks for all their kindnesse, intreate them to *study the truths of God I have asserted*, and embrace not their force against me, but against both extreames; for that love will not last, which is founded in present contradiction, without consent in positives asserted; *Love the Truth, and me for the Truths sake*, then shall ye have the comfort of loving indeed and in truth; It was my hope, and is my prayer, that our retrogradation in Reformation, would have made such who departed from us, to reflect with seriousness (even unto Repentance) the experienced remorse of separating, and Church confusion, to which Church-gathering hath resolved us; but if men harden themselves to uphold their sin, and strengthen their party, (to the utter subversion of this poor Church) and paganizing this Nation, they must give leave to trust God with their *love and kindnesse*, whilst to my power I resist their lusts; and let them know I cannot be a *Martyr of Faction*; I hope I can do all things, and suffer all things for the truth, and nothing against the truth: and must all my days pursue Reformation of Gods Ordinances in Union, and Communion with the Church, leaving my self, principles, and practises to the judgment of God; knowing it is an easie matter for me to be judged and misjudged by men, and yet abide what I am,

Julij 20.  
1661

*A servant to God, his  
Truth, and Church.*

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Z. C.





AN  
APPENDIX

To the foregoing

LETTER :

IN A

LETTER,

Written in answer to one, signifying

to Mr. CROFTON, the Offence which

was taken at his going to CHURCH,

And being present at the

COMMON-PRAYERS

IN THE

CHAPPEL

IN THE

TOWER

OF

LONDON.



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For Mr. Z.C. Prisoner in the Tower.

DEAR BROTHER,

**Y**OU cannot enough believe, how much your renewed publick Communion, with we know not whom, in the Ordinances, which they think cannot but be materially corrupt, especially in that place, hath grieved and alienated the hearts of the Godly; not only Members, but Ministers: Defend it how we can, They censure it not only Impolitick, but Impious; hardning our Enemies, weakning our Friends, undoing your good Testimony, and giving away the CAUSE, it being æque, if not æqualiter; as if you should Read and Administer the Form: They think there can be no Obligation of Duty, or Edification warranting the one, which may not also justify the other. The matter of Doctrine, and worship of Prayer, seems to be not only the objectum ad quem, but also per quibus, whether things or persons; wherein they take it for granted, the Common-Prayer is corrupt: As when you pray for Arch-Bishops, Bishops, as Ministers of a superiour Degree (and indeed according to the new corrected Form of Ordination, of the only Holy Order and Institution) wherein they are an Antichristian Order, &c. Or if only the Circumstance of the Form were exceptionable, yet you judge the Nurse may as well be bound in Duty and Necessity to give the Child his bread out of a Chamber-pot, as she her self, or the Child feed themselves out of it: Plead then you must necessity, for both or neither; and they expect you should do th' other too (se defendendo) or else supersede  
this

*this for the time to come : But if you proceed, I persuade myself of that very many Brethren which are συνημένοι in the rest, you will be alone in this ; for they can with more patience brook to be present, where there be personal corruptions in be Matter, than where there are circumstantial, material Offences in the Form.*

**Yours, Bound in your Bonds.**

**P. E.**

**FOR**

*For the Reverend Mr. P. E. to be communicated to other Christian Friends, and the Brethren of the Ministry concerned in his Letter, as scandalized at my Communion with the Church, in the Order of Service, by which I cannot administer.*

*Good Brother,*

**G**RACE and peace abound; yours (no little aggravation of mine affliction) I received, I thereby understand the grief, not only of Brethren in *Christianity*, but in the *Ministry*; because of (what you call *renewed*) my *Communion*, with their *Church*; in that *Service* by which I cannot administer: and what is to me more grievous, their *Censures* of my act, as *impolitic*, *yea impious*, *hardning our enemies*, *weakening our friends*, *undoing my good testimony*, and *giving away the Cause*: Sir, such is my esteem of the affections of the godly, that their grief must needs be mine: God is my witness, I desire, seek, study their joy; their grief for my duty, can only grieve me in by being groundless; whereby they wound themselves, by wounding him whom God hath grieved; and that by most bitter words, sharper then Swords or Razors, *hardning our enemies*, *weakening our friends*, are easily borne, they are events by accident; beyond the nature and intent of the Act, or the intention of the Agent; resulting from the wickedness of the one, and weakness of the other: to deem this Act, *Impolitic*, I take not ill; all my acts and writings have been such in their account; the *Censures* of the Committee of discretion, are to me so common, that they pass on me as things of course;

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branding with folly what could never be convinced of iniquity; but *impious* doth pierce mine intrails, to shun sin hath been my study, my smart; did not piety bar my policy, I could sleep in as whole a skin as my more prudent Brethren; the fear of God, conscience of duty, provokes this impious act; what a Monster of man hath God made me? my course is nothing but contradictions, *reasonable loyalty*; *schismatical unity*; *impious piety*: yet this is not all; *an undoing of my good testimony*, and giving away the Cause, and so an *Apostate*, can any thing cut deeper? be more clouding to my sufferings? more deprive God of the glory thereof? it pierceth my soul to cry Lord judge between me and Brethren, *my wiuesse is on high*, *my Record is above*; I have charity for *Jobs* miserable comforters; they spake well of God, though their arguing reproved not *Job*, for they spake with a mistaken zeal; I believe they were Saints against whom *Paul* appealed; it is an easie thing for me to be judged of *men*, my judgment is of the Lord; The Lord strengthen my patience under this most provoking temptation, that I may with sobriety reason against clamorous censorious Brethren.

My good Brother, where is sobriety? charity? is zeal for purity a *Moses* Serpent, to devour these Graces of the Spirit? *Cave*.

Why is my now attendance on solemn publick worship, branded to be *renewed communion*, with you know not whom? if you mean this of persons individual, truly as to the most I know not whom, nor can I think you judge it necessary; I cannot in my first communion know it in any Congregation; is Church gathering become a Presbyterial principle? is it the work of every age? is seven, not seventy years an age? is non knowledge of Members a cause of non communion? would not common charity make me know them to be a Society of Christians? worshippers of the true God in Jesus Christ, and are they not hereby members of the Church Catholick visible, particularly divided by local circumscription? or have we renounced this principle? is not the

the Liberty of the Tower a *particular Church*, in a Presbyterian sence as well as *Christ Church*, or *Alhallows Bread-street*? If I communicate in these, must I not communicate with I know not whom? may I not *hear the Gospel preached*, and (in calling on God in the name of Christ, for things agreeable to his will) *communicate* with I know not whom? But why is my communion *renewed*? I never denied; I never ceased from; I never was cut off from communion with the English Reformed Church, and its particular Assemblies: must Independents be verified in the false reproach, (*viz.*) *Presbyterial Churches were gathered Churches*? Presbytery interrupted was the Church dissolved? and Communion abandoned? *Cave.*—We have disowned, denied, determined sin, and danger in these Notions; I have more charity than to think my self out of *Communion*, because violently debarred from *Convention* with the particular Assemblies of the Reformed English Church. God having at length opened me a door of liberty to attend his solemn publick worship in this place, with this Assembly, why is my acceptance, and use thereof clamorously condemned as an act not only *impolitic*, but *impious*? do not you know this is the execution of a resolution, neither *new* nor *rash*? not *new*, for I thus determined, and thus *practised in my youth*, when piety was reproached by profane men, as *Puritanism*, and by the *Brownists* as *corrupt Communion*: I thus determined, and declared in my publick *Ministry*, and preaching for Reformation: I thus determined in all my late disputes and writings; whilst I was at liberty I thus *practised on accidental occasions*; I (herein convinced, and hereof perswaded) *prayed the liberty I now enjoy*, the first day I was committed prisoner to this place, and have ever since petitioned to enjoy it: this act you know is not *rash*, but the result of mature and deliberate thoughts, besides what hath passed between God and mine own soul; I have heard and weighed the objections of *separating* as well as *reforming brethren*; and after many expostulations I have (you know it) stated my Case of Conscience, drawn up my

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reasons;

reasons, communicated them to Brethren, and Christian Friends; craved a *Confutation* from more than one; prayed fraternal Correction, by solid and serious Argumentation; and professed a readiness to hear, and obey Conviction: I wonder after all this, and Nine Months time to have corrected, convinced my Judgment; I shall be censured for bringing it to A&T, and you should now call for an Apology.

Dear Brother, How long shall I complain? when shall I be known, and dealt with as a Brother? Is it fair Play to revile, and not reprove? To condemn, and not confute? Will you neither convince my Conscience, nor be content without Censures, to see me obey it? Are you angry to be imposed on, and yet expect I should live by an implicate Faith; and forbear what is to me a positive Duty, on this bare Reason, *The Brethren will be displeased*? Let me say it without Prophaneness or Levity, *Be not wise overmuch*: The Offence of Brethren hath its place and weight in my Soul; but must be well grounded, before it counterpoize Conscience of positive, indispensable Duty.

I well understand not the Epithites which vilifie my present A&T, because they are general, and without Reason.

That it is *Impolitick*, I may not deny; I have ever been estranged to, and at enmity with the Brethrens Policies and Fancy: If they had in some things been as *foolish* as silly I, God might have had more *Glory*, Truth more *Strength*, the Church more Purity and Order, my self more Liberty; their Comforts I know not, nor will adventure to judge: What Policies this A&T must relate unto, I know not; unless, it be the *Strengthening*, and so *justifying* those *Schisms* which supplanted, subverted our Reformation, by those *Seditious*, *Rebellions*, *Treasons*, which have made it Odious, and scandalized the endeavours thereof; that the most Upright, and Innocent among us, are pressed under it. If Brethren were sensible, That my Zeal for Reformation is reproached, repelled; and my self, thus oppressed by these Schisms; they would not sure think it *Policy* to strike hands with them; or *Impolitick*, to appear really, as well as verbally against them.

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God knoweth I may not long speak, let me speak freely : Truly Brother, foolish I, think it *aque*, and *aqualiter* *poli-*  
*sick*, for serious sober Reformers, to unite with *Non-commu-*  
*nitating*, *Separating*, *Congregational Brethren*, in the Church-  
 confounding, nullifying principles and pra<sup>ti</sup>ses : As for our  
 late *King-Killers* to cry up the *COVENANT*, and con-  
 found the Quarrel of the Parliament, with the *Good Old*  
*Cause*. Confound 62. with 52. and you may reconcile  
 48. to 43. and soon return to 48. again: Agree these in  
*Ecclesiasticks*, and divide them in *Civils* if you can. I wish I  
 could not scent some Brethren (offended at my Act) as  
 tainted already in their *Civils*: But I am a Fool, be it so; yet  
 a Fools Bolt is soon shot. If *Presbyters* will wisely serve  
 Gods Providence, and do his Church proper Service, Now it  
 is their Time, and Business to witness Corruptions *circa cul-*  
*tum publicum*, will not warrant *Non-communion* with seces-  
 sion or separation from a true Church, and such I yet deem  
 England: Correct this folly, and I may become wise; till  
 then, I will through Grace, joy in my folly. I have observed  
 indeed Gods, and the Kings Fools were never many: But  
 truly, foolish I, could never judge it good Policy, That *Non-*  
*communion*, *Separation*, and the *Scismatical Spawn*, should  
 shroud themselves, and be sheltered by *Non-conformity* and  
*Reformation*: Hath not our dear-bought Experience taught  
 us, That the Repute of being the Parent of these, hath been  
 the *Remora*, and Retroversion of that? Can we forget, how  
 these, when in Power, did divide, divert, and destroy *Refor-*  
*mation*; Paganize all England, and plant *One hundred and*  
*twenty gathered Churches*, and thereby proclaim *Entirety*, not  
*Purity* of the Churches, was their Quarrel? And shall we  
 not now be so wise, as to disown, and deny them, as a Bastard  
 brood: Now they are taken as Vagrants, and whip't up to  
*Non-conformists*, as their reputed Parents? Can we ever wit-  
 nesses Relation more than by these affectionate embraces in  
 this day of Discrimination? O! that my Brethrens Policy  
 were so wise, as to consider the Duty and Necessity of differ-  
 ing *Reformation* and *Separation*, and that they would ponder

der the Honour and Benefit of *Non-conformity*, protesting, and praesiding against *Non-communication*, in this day, when its Enemy doth confound and destroy this for the sake, and under the name of that. But whither am I gone? I must come back like a Fool, and tell you, I could never bear it into my Brains, That it was good Policy to run out of an unclean disordered House, under pretence of cleansing and regulating the same. My little will led me to abide in it, and by a Scrub Beesom of a reproving Ministry, such as I can get, to bring the Dust about mine Ears: I judge it prudent filth which hangs on my Cloaths, in a regular endeavour to get it out of my House; I am mistaken, if ever my House will cleanse it self, if I run and call all others out of it: Once more, and all my wit is wasted; I am an Irish man, and never yet was so wise to lie in the Field, open to cold and wet, because the Beasts, not only stood, but unhandisomly dung'd in my lodging Chamber? I have been used to Impoliticks, but am unwilling to be better advised. *Impolitick!* That is nothing, Fools may go to Heaven; but my Act is *impious*, This cannot be endured, without good Evidience, it is an high Charge: I pray, wherein lies its *impiety*? This seemeth contrary to the general nature of the Act; for that is a *Religious Attendance on the Solemn Publick Worship of the true God in Jesus Christ*. Irregularity and Disorder may be an iniquity in the Administrator; but that the *Attendance on Gods Worship disorderly dispensed, is impious in Gods People*, my Bible doth not teach; lend me yours, for I will not persist in any thing that writeth *impiety* on my Soul; my Charity will not allow me to charge them with *impiety*, who voluntarily attend this Service, only because they do so; misguided Zeal is not alwayes *impious*. I dare not charge our *first Reformers*, and *Marian Martyrs*, to have gone to the Stake, under the Guilt, and in the very Act of *impiety*? and yet many of them went embracing, commending, chanting, and concluding their last Devotion and Breath, in the *Words*, and *Order of the Common-Prayer*. Gradual Defect, will not acquit their Act from *impiety*; if it now be, it then was an *Act impious*

*impious* to serve God by the *Common-Prayer*. Our measure of increased light, and many Obligations, may aggravate our persistance in it, but will not alter the *nature* of the Act, in it self *impious*. Conscience bindeth me to be present in the Solemn Convocation, and personally attend his Publick Worship; the which, when I come to it, is by the impious Administrator, dispensed in a rude, disorderly, irreverend Mode, which maketh it my burden, and my Soul to loath, what I dare not leave, because it is for Matter and essential Form the Lords Ordinance: Is this an Act *impious*? Let Brethrens *Piety* work by Charity, to evince the *Impiety*; I will give Glory to God, and return; till then, let me proceed without Censure.

You specify some Sequels of this mine attendance on *Solemn Publick Worship*, in this Mode and Order; but they are such, as will not convince the same of *impiety*; you say,

I hereby *weaken Friends*, and *strengthen Enemies*: I pray you how, and wherein? The Friends and Enemies of *Non-Communion* and *Separation*, from the English Reformed Church, never came into the Calender of my Friends or Enemies; nor were they ever owned by sober *Non-conformists*, contesting for gradual Reformation: If such be hereby *strengthened*, and *weakned*; I bless God that I have done my Duty, and that my practice doth edifie, whilst I am not permitted to preach. I must confess, it is one end of my Action; I account it mine Honour, really to witness against *Non-communication*, in my very Conflicts for *Reformation*: But if Friends and Enemies to that *Gradual Reformation*, incumbent on our age and hands, be *weakned*, or *strengthened*, it may be mine *Affliction*, it is not mine *Impiety*; for this Event is by accident, not natural and genuine; the result of weakness in the one, and wickedness in the other, who consider not that *Non-conforming Communion*, is an indispensable Duty, and essential to Church-Reformation. I must keep in my house if I will cleanse it, though the filth in it is mine Annoyance: *Circumstantial Defects*, Redundant Appendants, and Disorders, will not warrantably discharge mine attendance



attendance on the *substantial, and truly existing worship of God*: In this Case, give me leave to say to stumbling Friends and Brethren, you have Zeal, but *not according to knowledge*. I must by *Union* with the Church, seek *Purity* of Ordinances; and none but wilful Fools, or mad Men, will run to the Channel to drink, because men at Sea are glad to drink stinking water, or deny to wash the Vessel, or force all for ever to drink in such unclean Vessels, because some through necessity can, and do drink in such: And yet Brother, I cannot but tell you, I have the comfort of my own Endeavours, to anticipate this *accidental Event*, by those Papers which I passed into the City, with an intent to have passed them into the World; in which you have my Apology for this *Act*: And in Answer to this Objection, I pray God they who stopped their Publication, when they might have done it, may seriously consider the service they have done the Church of God; I could do no more to make *even paths to weak feet*; if those who should, would not pave it, I cannot help it; I am innocent of the blood of all men, who stumble at this *Act* (in it self *lawful*) and indispensably necessary, because of those accidents which I have done my part to anticipate.

But you say, I hereby *undo my good Testimony, and give away the Cause in which I appeared*, This beareth indeed an Aspect of *Impiety*; an Apostate is odious to God and men: I have ever resolved (and may ere long prove it) to dye, rather than do this; my Conscience beareth me witness, *All this is come upon me, yet have I not dealt falsely in the Covenant*. Had this been objected by men who knew not Mr. Crofton, who never read the Writings for which he suffered, it had been a tolerable mistake; well may others, when my Familiars and Brethren so much mistake my *Testimony*, and misread my *Cause*; well might Thomas Tomkins confound me with our late Usurping Traytors, when my *Fellow-Presbyters* confound me with Separatists. I observe you grant my *Testimony* given, is *good*; I wish it had been owned with less fear and shame, I had been then more encouraged in it: But I pray Brother, what was it? Was it the *Cause of separation from*,  
or

or *Non-communication* with the English Reformed Church, because corrupt, or Backslider in its Reformation? Have I been all this time a Martyr for Independency? nothing less; *Zachary Croston* a Separatist from, or *Non-communicant* with a backsliding, corrupt, disordered Church, is as great, as clear a Contradiction, as *Zachary Croston* a Traitor to King Charles the Second: Which of the people who sate under my Ministry, will say, I now undo the good Testimony I gave, and give away the Cause for which I appeared? Do I now practice otherwise than I have preached? Who hath read the Books for which I suffer, and will say, I, by this Act, Give away the Cause, and undo my good Testimony? Read my Bonds, pag. 35. Whatever shall be the establishment in the Church, though never so corrupt, yet whilst consistent with Salvation, though it may occasion to me Suffering, and Suspension of my Ministry, by Gods Grace it shall not effect in me Schism from the Church. Read my Fetters, pag. 49, 50. This Reformation cannot justify the Separation; for that the Corruptions established, were never made a sufficient ground for Separation; sober, serious Non conformists, who groaned under the burden of these Corruptions, and for this Reformation, were grieved by, and greatly contended against this Separation, as that which wanted sufficient ground. Read again mine Epistle to Mr. Firmins Lyturgicall Considerator, in pag. 3. I can keep Communion under that Form of Worship whereby I cannot Administer; and I can heartily say Amen to the Matter of those Petitions which are put up in an Order so confus'd, preposterous, and indigested; that it seemeth to me to be so much below the Gravity of the Church, whose mouth I must be; the Seriousness of the Office whereby I administer, the Sanctity of the Duty I am to perform, and the Sacred Nature of the Object to whom they are presented, that I dare not stand between God and his people with the same. This last is part of my Testimony concerning, and against the *Lyturgy* it self: Now Sir, What is my good Testimony? Wherein is it undone? Am I not practising the Cause in the express state in which I stated it? It was ever far from mine intentions to be an Advocate, much less

a *Martyr*, for *Non-communication and Separation* : Non-conformity and Reformation is my *Cause*, hath made my *Testimony* ; if I undo, or give away this *Inculca me tanquam salerni insipidum*. Good Brother, read me right, and charge me not with *Apostacy* ; who drive with all my main, my *good Testimony* against the one, as well as the other, extream of Reformation : You wound your selves, and engage Enemies (by your Censures) to Clamour, and call me *Apostate* : But you cannot convince me, nor any that know me and my *Testimony*, that I am started one hairs breadth from my *Cause* ; this condemned practice, is the formal pursuit of my Contest ; I must therefore see very good grounds before I give back.

Having answered your Charge of *Impolicy and Impiety*, I must consider your suggested Arguments against mine attendance on Gods Solemn Publick Worship in this place and order : And truly Brother, these are few and obscure, I understand them not : You speak of *Ordinances*, which the Brethren think to be materially corrupt : I can say no more to this, but only to request they will speak out their thoughts, and specify the seeming corrupt matter, and then I will judge concerning it : And when they come to do this, I think they will find, *Secunda Cogitationes sunt meliores* ; they will find it is the *Mode*, not *Matter*, that is corrupt. You say, *The Matter of Doctrine, and Worship of Prayer*, seemeth not only to be the objectum ad quem (I think quod more proper) but pro quibus ; whether things or persons, wherein they take it for granted the *Common-Prayer* is corrupt. This I profess I understand not ; What do you mean by the *Matter of Doctrine, and Worship of Prayer* ? Are these terms Synonymous ? Intend you by them *Doctrine* suggested in, and by *Prayer* ? Or the *Credentials of the Common-Prayer-Book*, distinct from the *Worship of Prayer* ? I pray you explain yourself, and then know, *Think so, Seemeth so*, and take for granted, may be supposed grounds for your *Censures* ; but signifie nothing to my *Conviction* ; which must be on certainty if it supersede, what

what I conclude indispensable Duty : Indeed your annexed instance maketh me think, you mean the *Matter of Doctrine suggested by Prayer* ; for you specify *Arch-Bishops and Bishops, as a superiour Degree of Ministry* ; and if so, you will give me leave to tell you, you have antedated your Objection ; for our Books pray for none but *Bishops and Curates, or Pastors and Curates* ; so that till the time of change come, I may ( notwithstanding this Exception ) continue my Communion ; when the new Book cometh, I may consider the weight of this Plea ; in the mean time I pray you resolve me, *Will single Errours preached, much less suggested in Prayer, warrant Non-communication with a true Church, Non-attendance on Gospel-Ministry, and Gods Solemn Publick Worship ?* What meaneth, when bindeth that Rule of our Redeemer, *Be ware of the Leaven of the Pharisees ?* I cannot understand by *take heed what you hear ?* hear not them *who teach for Doctrines the Traditions of men.* May not a personal Dissent be entered to a Petition, for a mistaken Object, and suggesting an Errour as its Basis ? Or must the whole Prayer for *Matter* generally good, therefore be disowned ? This will necessitate, and was the first cause of *Se-forms of Prayer*, and require that they *compo'd*, be not only communicated *fratribus doctioribus* ; but also to every individual Member of the Church, who must join in Prayer ; and so Sir, we fight well, to lie upon, by flying from a Common-Prayer Book.

You add, The Brethren think mine attendance on it is *equal*, if not *aqualiter* ; *As if I should read or administer by this Form ; and that there can be no Obligation of Duty, or Edification warranting the one, which may not also justify the other.* To this I say, *Think so* will not convince ; but of such who thus think, I would enquire, Is the common state of a Christian, different from the special state of a Minister ? And to the Capacities, Duties, and Obligations of each different ; so that the one may be *continued*, while the other doth *cease*. The one may, and must be *altered*, when the other is *arrested*.

ed, superseded, or violently barred; if men of power in the Church will *discapacitate me for the one, doth it ipso facto, discharge me from the other*. Do, our discapacitated Common Council-men cease to be *Citizens*? Or be they not bound to retain their Relation, and participate or communicate in the common good of the City, under what (they judge to be) the rude and disordered Government thereof? I do not believe the Obligation of my *Ministry*, to be *aque, or equaliter*, necessitous and extensive with that of *Christianity*. I must be, and act as a *Christian*, when those conditions are required from me which I cannot yield, and without which I may not be permitted to act as a *Minister*; and those conditions will not discharge the Duties of the one, nor bar the Exercise of them which do bar the other. I a Minister, stand in a *general and special* Relation to the Church, and am charged with Duties proper and peculiar to each of these. I may be sinfully imposed on, and restrained from my *special*, by those things which will not bar the Duties of my *general* Relation and Capacity: I conceive Administration of Gods Worship, is much different from Attendance on Gods Worship; and I stand bound to the last, when I am (justly or unjustly) barred from the first. *Ahiathar*, and the *Idolatrous Priests*, were not barred from serving God with the Church, when thrust from serving in the Priests Office. In my *general* Relation, as a *Member of the Church*, I stand charged, and am capacitated to judge the *Matter, and essential Form of Gods Worship*; assent to which, is mine only Act: But in my *special* Relation, as a *Minister*, I stand also charged, and am capacitated to judge the *Ministerial Mode*, and humane Order by which Gods Worship is celebrated; and if herein I be imposed on, and that by an Order rude, irreverend, and unsuitable to God, his Church, or Worship; which right Reason, much less true Religion, will not allow me to receive; I am interrupted in my *Ministerial* Office, the Formality of which is, *As a man to Modify Gods Institutions*, whereby an intercourse is maintained between God and men; such imposition I judge to be a subversion of *Ministerial*

*Ministerial Office and Authority* ; not to be offered by others, or admitted by my self, without great iniquity ; and if it therefore be enforced by violence, that I must be restrained from my *Ministerial Modification of Gods Ordinances* according to mine Office, and Ministerial Gifts received ; or I may not be permitted to Minister. I yet stand in my Relation, as a *Member of the Church*, bound to communicate : The *Ministerial Mode imposed*, and *sinfully received* (by such as subjugate their Ministry ) not *vitiating the Subject*, or nullifying the Ordinances of God ; will not warrant my Non-attendance on them : It is not equally necessitous and obliging, that I a Speaker, pronounce a wild indigested Speech, full of Incongruities, Non-sense, and Solecisms (from which a sound mind doth bar me) as that I join and concur in the Substantials thereof with the Assemblies, so asking common and certain good things.

I may not cast off my general Relation, wherein I am *purely passive*, because those things are to be personally acted in my special Relation and Capacity, which I cannot without sin consent to do, and therefore must stand still. I cannot beat it into my Brains, that it is *aque*, or *equaliter* to attend, and give an Assent unto the *Matter prayed*, as to utter, pronounce, and express the *raw, rude, and disorderly Speech of the Speaker* : Or that the *Necessity or Obligation* of the whole House, in this general Order to present it self before his Majesty, which will and doth warrant the one, may justify the other ; the Speakers Speech is often censured, when the Commons concerned in it are commended and justified.

But Sir, Rather than not enforce this Fancy, you will knock me on the Head with a *Chamber-pot* ; you urge my necessity to Communion, to be the same to *Ministrations*, and tell me, *I judge the Nurse is bound in Duty and Necessity to give the Child his bread* ( his milk had been



been more proper) out of a Chamber-pot, as she her self, or the Child is self out of it: An homely Simile, but in a starving Necessity, I do judge so; but I judge Similes do not *currere quatuor pedibus*, there is no aptitude in this to my Case, that Necessity will constrain me to take my Meat in an unclean Vessel; which will not constrain me to give it in that Vessel to another. I suppose your Nurse is poor, who hath no other Vessel but a *Chamber-pot*; yet I must suppose her a good Huiwife capacitated to make it *clean*: But if her Superiours have stripped her of all other, and will bar her from her cleansing this, I suppose she is not bound to play the Nurse, and feed others, though she must thus feed her self; if filthy Parents will have such Nurses, or none, I hope it is in my power to be none of them, I am not bound to it, I am by Nature bound to deny it; and yet I must maintain mine own *being* as well as I can: If the *being* of Christianity depend upon my *personal Ministry*, as my *being*, or appearing a *Christian*, doth on my *Communion* with the Church visible, your Inference might be of some force, but this it doth not: That therefore you may understand the difference, keep to similitudes more apt: The King hath Decreed, All the Citizens shall each Month present their Petitions by a joint Assent to the Expressions of a Speaker; the Governours of this City direct a course by which to design different Speakers, they consult *Matter* to be spoken, and the *Mode* of speaking; the first is *good*, and *allowed*; the second is *rude*, and *disordered*; the Speakers can better express the desired Matter, but shall not be permitted; are they *aque*, or *equaliter*, obliged to speak in this *Mode*, as to attend this Assembly, and give Assent to this common good *Matter* rudely expressed by others? Not speaking in this *Mode*, they lose the Honour and Advantages of the Speakers; but not attending, or assenting to the Matter, they lose the benefit and being of Citizens; are these equally to be embraced and pursued? They are bound in the one  
personally

personally to *Act*, and denying to subjugate their *Judicium rationale*, to the rude Prescriptions of others, they are barred from it; but resolved into the common state, in which, *assent to the Matter* is their only *Act*, being wholly and purely passive in the prescribed and imposed Form and Mode of expression; in your *Chamber-port* Case, you suppose *Christianity* to depend on my *personal Ministry* (which my Relation as a Nurse doth renounce) and then indeed your Inference may be cogent; for then your *Chamber-port* will square with *du Mouins, Fools Coat*; but in my more sutable and sociable Case, I am bound to *attendance* when, and where I am not bound to *administer*: The Necessity of City-Interest and Relation, doth bind me to *attendance*, and *assent to City-Petitions*; but not to the Duty and Dignity of a Speaker, between the King and the City, from which I am barred by the *irrational imposition* of an *irregular, undue Mode of expression*, in which I must personally act, by a suspense of my *Judicium rationale*, which I am bound to act in this more, and beyond what I must judge in my more common Capacity.

Now Sir, I must tell you, I know not whom you intend by the Brethren, who are *συνήχοι*, in the rest; sure I am, they are not *Congregationalists*, who have no little blasphemed the *COVENANT*, by their late Professions for it, and by their *Martyrs* pretences to it, as the Bond of their most barbarous, pernicious Treasons and Impieties; which was by themselves slighted as an *Almanack out of Date*, and prophanely, blasphemously violated before they could, or did consult and perpetrate the same: I cannot suppose them to be the Brethren, for the late *specific Difference*, whose Policy propounded an interpretation of the *COVENANT*, contrary to the literal sense, and Grammatical Construction thereof; from whom, and which you know, I was *ἀποσπῆς*; it hath been mine unhappiness, that few of the Brethren have

have been *συμ-βυχοι* in the present concernments of Reformation; nor could I expect it, whilst I could not be heard to speak; nor was worth reading when I had written.

Again, I must tell you that it is my Grief to observe that many are *συμ-βυχοι* in *Negatives*, who are, and are resolved to be *ἀν-βυχοι* in *Positives*: These agree with me in, and against the Disorders which should not be, but dissent from me in that Order which should be in the Church: They consent, when I say, *Ministers must not conform*; but understand me not, or affirm me Antichristian, when I say, *Members must communicate*. They own me as *Zealous*, when I cry to the sons of *Eti*, *You do wickedly, thus rudely to Administer*; but disown me as impious, when I tell *Israel*, *You must bring your Offerings to the Lord, though by reason of the profane Priests, and rude Administration thereof, your Soul doth loath them*. They like me well, and cry me up, when I say, *The Image of Jealousie provoketh God, and hath brought him down from his Mercy-seat, to the Threshold of the Temple*; but look a squint, and cry down, when I tell them, *I will follow, not go before God; Israel must know, and appear in the Temple as Gods house, though he be at the Threshold ready to depart, but not yet gone*. How long shall we represent the Spirit of Reformation, to be a Spirit of Contradiction? and verifie that odious Scandal, *That Non-conformists condemn every thing, but cannot tell what they would have*. I have observed new light is only reprehensive, but true light is also discretive and directive.

Good Brother, Desire such who in this are *ἀν-βυχοι*, to cast an eye on that Tract (almost lost in our late Confusions) which Cartwright, Geree, Hildersham, Dod, Ball, Hind, Nicholls, Langley, did tread out, between the Conformity then (as now) required; and the Non-  
communication

*communion* by the *Brownists*, and *Semiseparatists* then as now pressed, practised, and contested for, with more reviling Censures, than convincing Reasons.

I wish all those *Αντιποιοι* Brethren, would seriously study the Nature of *Separation and Non-communion*, and observe the *quality and quantity of Corruptions*, which all who have written on that Subject, have concluded may be in a Church, before they constitute a *warrantable Cause of Separation, or Non-communion*. I have not met with any who would not allow, yea, require Communion as a Duty with a Church whose Ministers are *vile, Members wicked, Ministration rude and disorderly, Censures wanting, or warding against the power of Godliness; Worship polluted, and in which Idolatry is practised, but conjoined with Gods true Worship; their Altars standing by Gods Altar; their Post by his Post; their Groves and high Places, in his holy Mountain, near unto his very Temple*. I will not in these Cases except *Cotton*, or *Hoker*; by whose Principles (the being of the Church admitted) I will be bound to defend my present Practice.

Good Brother, Remember, Consider our difference from the former state of these holy men is *Gradual*, not *Real*; the *Duty or Impiety* was in nature the same to them, the measure and aggravation is more to us: They indeed acted beyond what I can allow, and in what I can better excuse, than justify them; but their Arguments for Communion, are armed with Religious Reason, beyond what can be resisted.

If now, *I am left alone* (for I must yet proceed) I shall only note *paucity of Professors*, is attendant on all *Criticisms of Christianity*, strait is the Gate. *John* and *Caleb* must follow God *thoroughly, not turning to the right or left hand*. Gods Worship, disorder'd in its *Ministration and Mode*, I attend with Grief; but the *Corruption*

being *extrinsecal*, not vitiating the Subject, under which Gods Worship is for *Matter* and *constitutive Form* his own, I dare not leave it, I dare not but attend it; violent Restraint removed, I have no ground of Faith in neglect hereof, to expect *special Grace* or Presence; I cannot with Confidence appeal to God, with *Lord, Thou wilt have Me ey, not Sacrifice*. As a common Christian, I am charged to *judge the Matter*; as a Minister, the *Mode* and *Order of Gods Worship*; when it is convincingly demonstrated, that these two are *aque*, or *aqualiter*, *necessitous* and *obliging*, I shall either *Conform*, or cease to *Communicate*; till then, I pray you Brethren, receive my Practice as a *Comment* on my *Cause and Testimony*; and give me leave without your Censures (provoking, justifying the Clamours of the wicked) to walk with my God in Communion with his Church visible, conform to the *commanding Dictates of my Conscience*; This is the Desire of, Sir,

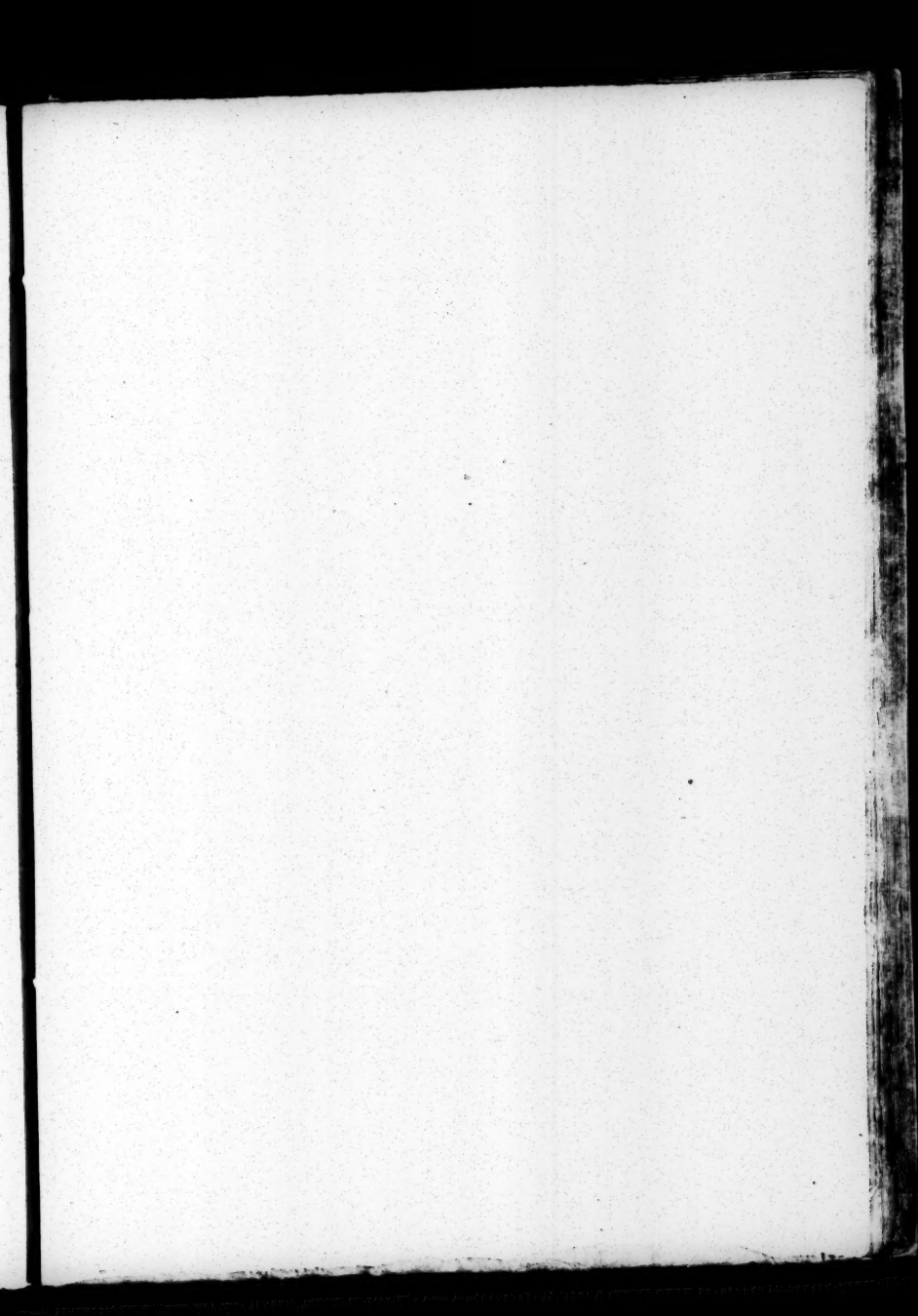
*Your Brother,*

*Constant to God,*

*And his Covenant.*

ZACHARY CROFTON.

FINIS.







THE  
Great Benefit  
*Of the Christian Education of*  
CHILDREN,  
Illustrated, Proved, and Prosecuted  
IN A  
SERMON,

Preached at ACTON in *Cheshire* May 26.  
1662. upon occasion of Founding a  
FREE-SCHOOL there.

---

By E. B. then Minister there.

---

*Come children hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear  
of the Lord. Psal. 34. v. 2.*

---

L O N D O N,  
Printed by. R. H. for Dorman Newman at the Kings Arms  
in the Pontrey, next to Grocers-Alley. 1663

THE  
Great Benefit

CHILDREN

ARMON

Free School there

Dr. J. W. Mendenhall

Some children have been removed from the school for being idle

LONDON

Printed by J. W. Mendenhall at the Kings Arms  
in the Strand, near to Chancery Lane

TO HIS  
DEARLY BELOVED  
THE  
INHABITANTS  
Of the Parish of  
ACTON,

And more especially to the CONTRIBUTORS  
to, and OVERSEERS of the Free  
GRAMMAR-SCHOOL  
lately founded there.

The Author dedicates this poor Piece as  
a testimony of his dear affection to  
them, and his unfeigned desire  
of the good of them and  
their Posterity.

AND

That their late founded School may not only for  
the present, but also for future times by  
the Blessing of God flourish  
and prosper.

Impri-

TO HIS  
DEARLY BELOVED  
THE  
INHABITANTS  
OF THE PARISH OF ST. MARTIN IN THE  
CITY OF LONDON

ACTON  
Imprimatur.

*M. Franck S. T. P. Re-  
verendo in Christo Patri  
Domino Episcopo Lond.  
a Sacr. Dom.*

Jan. 29.  
1667

their Poverty

AND

That their late founded School may not only for  
the present, but also for future times be  
the Blessing of God House  
and proper

Imprimatur



THE  
EPISTLE  
TO THE  
READER.

*Christean and Courteous Reader,*

**L**iterature, and the good Education of Youth, are of such necessity and advantage to Humane Society, whether Church or Commonwealth; that whosoever or whatsoever promoteth and provoketh the same, cannot pass without applause; and acceptance among sober men, and serious Christians.

Children are the subjects of Reason, capable of counsel, conviction and instruction: The seed of men, in and by whom Human Society is supplied, supported and succeeded in the world: And by Gods gracious extent of the Covenant of Grace, to beleivers and their seed, they are plants of Christs Church and Garden, by whose careful culture, and the good husbandry about them, true Religion is perpetuated in the world, being transmitted from ge-

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nera-

Acts 2. 39.



*To the Reader.*

neration to generation. But yet such is the innate ignorance, error and evil nature of all the sons of men, that since *Adams* fall they would seem wise, but are like a *wilde Asses Colt*; silly, sloathful, and subject to servility, wilde and rude, running without restraint; the reins of Reason being broken, they are acted by a sensual, belluine appetite; and driven by the impetuous violence of raging lusts, *Rushing into sin as the horse rusheth into the Battel*; God did indeed plant them a true and good vine, but they are degenerated, become wilde, bring forth nothing but *wilde Grapes*, until transplanted, and well pruned; like the cursed earth, without constant, careful, laborious Agriculture, they bear no fruit, but *briars and thorns*; Prophaneſs, Debauchery, Superſtition and Idolatry.

The spirit of a man (though a dark yet true light) as the *Candle of the Lord*, doth naturally discern; the disorder of the whole man doth, though not onely, yet chiefly depend upon, and reſult from the darkneſs of the mind, for *the light of the body is the eye*; if therefore the eye be evil, the whole body is full of darkneſs; and if the light which is in a man be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs? and that the leudneſs and looſneſs of the Rational Power, is the proper cauſe and principal reaſon of that belluine appetite, and thoſe raging luſts, by which men are enticed, drawn, and driven into all ſins: and hence 'tis that the very heathens have been acted to earneſt endeavours, for the rectifying of their minds, and reſtraining the extravagancy of their vain imaginations, as me certain rebuke, and (what they have accounted) the renewal of humane nature; reducing the wil and affections, to a regular attendance on, and ſuberviency to the mind; conſulting more what they *ſhould*, then what they *would*, and in a reſignation of themſelves to wholeſome inſtruction they have reſolved *Licet vobis naſci quicquid volumus*; they may be born what they will, virtuous or vicious; advancing Literature and good Education of their Children, as the curbe and correction of vice, having experienced.

## To the Reader.

----- Didicisse fideliter artes,  
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

Ovid.

*Reason* is the restraint of Rudeness, and that which differenceth Men from Beasts; and *learning* is only the recovery and perfection of reason; good Education is the only culture and husbandry of rational beings; this cutteth off superfluous branches in Mens conversation; this killeth the weeds, vices in mans nature; this healeth the hase, and barbarous barrenness of mens lives, and changeth the same into a fertility in contrary virtues.

*Invidus, Iracundus, Iners, vinosus, amator,  
Nemo adeo ferus est qui non mitescere possit,  
Si modo culturæ patientem accommodat aurem.*

Horace.

*Plutarch, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca*, and others, Philosophers, Poets and Historians among them, were no little earnest in enforcing *literature*, and *careful Education of youth*; and therefore were much esteemed by the people among whom they lived; by their advice, and instigation, the Nation, and Republics in any measure redeemed from barbarisme, did plant Schools, and provide for their Childrens nurture in the arts, and education in virtue, more then for their enjoyment of Riches and honour; which in the rude and untaught, were Jewels, in a Swines Snout; subscribing, and assenting to the problem of the late reverend Dr. *Joseph Hall*, as an undeniable axiom, worthy indeed to be fastned on every School-door, **NO SCHOLAR, cannot be TRUELY NOBLE.**

In his Epist.  
Dec. 4. Epist. 3.

The necessity and advantage of literature and good Education, thus glimpsed into the soul of man by the light of nature, is most clearly manifest by the bright beams of Scripture, and most apparently discovered in the world by the arising of the Sun of Righteousness.

Gods word doth charge ignorance to be the ground and guard of all impiety, the estate and times of the worlds profaneness, idolatry, superstition, and estrangedness to God

*To the Reader.*

Matth. 4. 16. are determined, and denominated an estate of darkness, and  
 Ephes. 5. 8. times of ignorance: the Character of wicked men is, that they  
 Acts 17. 30. know not God; the certain cause of mans alienation from God  
 Psal. 79. 6. is the ignorance which is in them; yea the Gentiles enmity to  
 Ephes. 4. 18. Christ, was the effect of their ignorance of Christ, for had  
 1 Cor. 2. 8. they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of life: Is-  
 rael's first Apostacy from God, was the act of a generation,  
 Judges 2. 10. which arose, and knew not God; their iniquity was the  
 fruit of oblivion, non observation, non instruction of  
 God: and to have the eyes of their mind blinded by the  
 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. Princes of darkness, least the light of the glorious Gospel  
 should shine into them, is the very seal of Reprobation;  
 if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them who perish.

The knowledge of God, is the curbe and cure of all ido-  
 latri and impiety, the light and sound of the Gospel-  
 lenced the Oracles of Apollo; overthrew the trade of De-  
 metrius; darkened and destroyed the Diana of the Epheti-  
 ans; discharged the Fornications, Adulteries, Idolatries,  
 1 Cor. 6. 11. and other enormities of the Corinthians: the Apostles ha-  
 ving experienced the power of knowledge of the grace of  
 God unto the cure of their accursed nature, who until then  
 Tit. 3. 3, 4. were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and  
 pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one  
 another, do commend it to all mankind, as that which  
 teacheth them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to  
 and 2. 12. live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil World.  
 Renovation of the mind is the first act of saving faith, the  
 formal act of Regeneration; hereby the Elect of God do  
 put off the Old man, which is deceitful according to di-  
 vers lusts; and put on the new man, which after God is  
 Eph. 4. 22, 23, 24. created in righteousness and true holiness.

Oral instruction, is a means so proper to man (the  
 subject of sense and reason) that God hath graciously pre-  
 scribed it, as the method of his salvation, the first age of the  
 World were onely ruled by tradition, and paternal in-  
 struction; nor did this means cease, when Gods mind was  
 given to man in writing, Parents were strictly charged to  
 Deut. 6. 6, 7. teach their Children; the Priests lips did reserve knowledge,  
 Mar. 2. 11. Schools

## To the Reader:

Schools were planted throughout all *Israel*, to nurture the sons of the Prophets, unto the service of the Lord; not onely was *Paul* brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*; but our Lord *Jesus* himself, sat (as a Disciple, say *Calvin*, *Maylorat*, and our own *Downham*) among the Doctors: and the Gospel giveth a most severe charge to Christian Parents, that they bring up their Children in the nurture and admnition of the Lord; which the learned *Zanchy* doth interpret to be in Arts, moral vertues, and the knowledge of God and true Religion: and the increase of the Gospel, did cause Schools of literature to be planted as History doth tell us, not onely by Apostolical men, but the Apostles themselves; *Philo Judeus* doth report the School at *Alexandria*, founded by *Ptolomeus*, to have been Christianized by *Mark the Evangelist*; this course was over continued, and countenanced, yea contended for, according to the love, care, and zeal men have born unto true Religion; for never would any but a Christian-persecuting *Licinius*, account literature the poyson and pest of the Common-wealth; or an Envious Apostate *Julian*, put down Schools of learning, never would any but blind Papiſts prohibit Christian education.

### Courteous Reader.

The occasion of the ensuing discourse was that, for which we must praise God; that by which many men have eternized their name, and expressed their love to vertue, and true religion, and from which after ages may by Gods blessing reap unspeakable profit; who knows what Learned (a) *Aſcham*, Reverend (b) *Dr. Whitaker*, solid (c) *Andrews*, or profound (d) *Uſher*; may hence arise to make famous the name of the place, and Masters, in which and by whom they were first instructed in Learning, and true Religion, the (\*) *Athenians* in celebrating the Feast of *Theseus* their founder, were accustomed on the Eve to sacrifice a Ram, o the memory of *Conidus* his School-master: this work being of weight, went not without the serious counsel of a gave Divine, long experienced in the

a The Schollar of Mr. Bond in a School in Lancashire.

b He made famous the School at Brundly in the same County, Mr. Harrgrave his School-master.

c The glory of *Mulcaster*.

d The first Schollar of Trinity College in *Dublin*.

\* *Plat.* in *vie. Theſ.*

the

*To the Reader.*

the teaching both men and boys, and therefore able to speak pertinent instruction unto both; there is no reason the directions which relate unto, should expire whilst the School abideth on its foundation, there is no way to preserve them, but the presenting to the eye, what passed through the Ear.

*Vox audita perit, litera Scripta manet.*

The Author having put them into Writing; I have in zeal to make comamon so great a good, put them into Print; it is and shall be my Prayer to God that the School at *Alton in Cheshire*, may really prove what is Printed on the wall of *Pauls School London*, *Schola Catechizationis, puerorum in optima & maxima fide Christi*, I therefore pray the Masters therewith entrusted may not want prudence or diligence; nor that Parents may so much prejudice their Children as to let them loiter at home, whilst they have a School provided, in which they may labour according to their capacity for their real and eternal good of body and soul.

Our lot is fallen into the last and worst days of the world; in which faith faileth, whilst all manner of profaness, and debauchery, not onely aboundeth, but waxeth confident, even in those whose honourable extract should encline them to a more vertuous and Christian course of life; and ignorance, or ill education will be easily admitted, the cause whereof may I presume to speak of the Sons of Englands Church, in the words of one

Dr. Hall, Bp. of *Norwich* in his *Epist. Decade 6. Epist. 6.* of her late Prelates: *many boast of generosity, who neither possess nor pursue Learning or Vertue, which is rue Nobility: many follow all fashions, drink all Helths, wear Favours, Feathers, and good cloaths; consort with Ruffianly Companions, Swear the biggest Oaths, Quarrel easily, Fight desperately, Game in every inordinate Ordinary, spend their Patrimony ere it fall, look on every man between scorn and anger, use gracefully some gestures of Apostles complements, dally with a Mistris, (or rich terme is plainer)*  
bunt



### To the Reader.

*bunt after Harlots, take smook at a Play-house, and live as made all for sport; and think they have done enough to merit their blood; and the good opinion of others: certainly if this be generosity, the World hath no baseness, the shame hereof is not so proper to the wildness of youth, as to the carelessness and vanity of parents; I speak it boldly, our Land hath no such blemish, comparable to the miseducation of our Gentry: unto the cure of which, no means is or can be more effectual, then the frequent and fervent exhortations of this nature, inculcated to such who have the charge and tuition of youth, and suggested, yea spoken out in the following Tract.*

*It is the saying of the Wisest Solomon, A Wise Son maketh a glad Father, but a foolish Son is the heaviness of his mother, and again, The Father of a Fool can have no joy: the Holy Mr. Greenham observeth that the Holy Ghost in Scripture speaking of foolish Sons, meaneth it not so much of natural Idots, destitute of common reason, as of wicked, ignorant, and untaught children, Lavanfer doth determine the wisdom of the Child, to consist in his knowledge of humane Arts, obedience to Parents, and the government of himself by the instructions of Gods Word, and the Learned Mercer doth interpret, the Fathers begetting a foolish Son in this case, not to signifie his first and natural generation, but his neglect, or miscarriage in nurture and education; the fear and care of which is indeed a painful travel, onely eased by the good instruction of the child: from all these, this is a most manifest truth, the Parents who will have pleasure in their Children, must put them to School, and provide for their Christian Education.*

Prov. 10. 1.  
and 17. 21.

Vid. his Sermon  
of the education of children, p. 86

In loc.

In loc.

*Readers, Are women, and shall we suffer the decays of Reason, to abide upon our Children without repair; are we Christian, and shall we suffer our Children to degenerate for want of culture? have we dedicated our Children to God by Baptism, and shall we not educate them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? hath God graciously owned our seed, and set his Covenant on their flesh,*  
and



To the Reader.

and shall we suffer the Devil to seize and possess them? God forbid! Are we zealous for Reformation, and shall we forget *Luthers* counsel, to secure it by the Reformation of our Children? are we anxious for Religion, and its existency when we are dead, and shall we not take care to plant it in posterity whilst we live? are we ambitious our Children, if called to it, should affect the crown of Martyrdom, let us then betimes, acquaint, affect them with the principles, practices, priviledges of Christianity. What lustre did *Sophia* and her three children; *Symphronisa* and her seven children, in the third: *Falicias* and her seven children, in the fourth; the Child Martyred with *Romanus*, and the Woman of *Syria* and her two Daughters, in the Tenth pagan persecution, bring unto the Christian faith? how Honourable among Protestants is the memory of the dexterous debates of the well-instructed children of *Merindal* and *Cabriers*, confounding the very Doctors of *Sorbon*. Nothing doth more loudly proclaim the efficacy of early instruction and good Education then the confessions of the enemies of the truth. The Papists long since confessed the ground that Protestants had gotten of them was by diligence in this Course, and the Protestants may now lament the ground they have lost to the Papist is by the neglect hereof. That God may quicken Parents, and all having the tuition of youth, unto a studious education of them in his way, and to this end bless the ensuing Tract and exhortation, is and shall be the constant prayer of

Thine in the Lord,

ZACH: CROFTON.

T O



# A S E R M O N

Preached at

# ACTON,

Upon occasion of Erecting a Free-School there, *May 26. 1662.* being the day of the Masters Entrance.

Text Prov. 22. v 6.

*Train up a child in the way he should goe, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

**H**is day may be called the day of the *The occasion*  
Dedication of the Free-School of *of this Ser-*  
*mon.*  
*Acton*; for to this end are we met together, both to praise God for the accomplishing so good a work, and also to pray unto him for a happy entrance and good success for the future.

B

The

The Heathen Proverb was, *A fove principium*; and the practice of the wisest of them was answerable: for before they began any great enterprize, they usually consulted their Gods, prayed and sacrificed to them for good success. A shame therefore it must needs be, and a great sin also, to Christians, who are better instructed in the knowledge of the true God, and know his will, if they should neglect so necessary a duty.

I have therefore chosen this Text, as containing fit matter for our present occasion; and shall (according to my wonted method) First explain, Secondly divide the words, Thirdly raise the observations they afford, and prosecute them.

*Explication.* *Train up*] The word חנך in the Original signifies to initiate, or enter, to teach, instruct, catechise, or endue with good principles, and precepts of learning and virtue. It signifies also to consecrate, devote, or dedicate, as the Jews did their houses, and that by Gods special commandment, as in *Dent. 30. 5.* *What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it, &c.* And in the title of the 30. Psalm, a word coming from the same root is used. *A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house of David.* Their manner was to dedicate or sanctifie their houses, when first built, by invocation of the name of God for a blessing upon them: And if they had been polluted by some facinorous and wicked actions, to re-dedicate them: and so some learned men think *David* did when his Son *Abshlom* had polluted his house by incest. See *2 Sam. 20. 3.*

חנכה חכית ליוך  
Dedicatio  
domus *Davidis.*

*A Child*] לבער. It is rendred by the word *Infans*, an Infant, *puerum* a child, *puerulum* a little child. And

(3)

it comes of a word that signifies to shake out, because such a one is (as it were) newly shaken out of the womb.

*In the way that he should goe.* ] Heb, לַדֶּרֶךְ, word for word, it is upon the mouth or face of his way. *Junius* and *Tremellius* render it, *Pro ratione via ipsius*. *Pagnine* *secundum modum ejus*, much to the same purpose, i. e. according to his manner or ability to conceive. *Rabbi David* gives the sense thus. *Begin to teach a child from his very child hood, secundum viam aut modum ejus*, according to his way or manner i. e. paulatim, paulatim, ut ferre possit, by little and little, as he is able to conceive. So that the meaning of the Holy Ghost seems to be thus; Neglect no time, but seasonably and as soon as may be, begin to teach, catechise and instruct thy child in the good way that he should goe, that he may know his duty both to God and man, &c.

*And when he is old.* ] כִּי יִזְקֵן, *Etiam cum senuerit*, when he is grown in years; or as *Junius* renders it, *cum valde senuerit*, when he shall be very old.

*He will not depart from it.* ] לֹא יִסּוּר מִסֶּנֶה. *Non recedet ab illa (scil.) via institutionis, dedicationis, &c.* he will not depart from the good way thou hast entred him in, brought him up, and instructed him, but will persevere and hold on in it even to his death.

The words then thus explicated contain in them *Solomons* good counsell to Parents, School-masters, Tutors, and Guardians, for the good and pious education of the children committed to their care and charge, wherein we may observe.

1. The matter of the charge, viz. to train up a Divine child in the good way he should goe.

B 2

2. The

2. The motive perswading to this duty, taken from the great benefit that will accrue to him thereby. It will not be lost labour, but do him much good, not only for the time present, but also and especially for the time to come, yea as long as he liveth, *When he is old he will not depart from it.*

And, according to these two parts observe with me these two points or propositions, which flow naturally from the Text.

*Def. 1.* First, that the Religious education of children is a main duty incumbent upon Parents, and of very high concernment to them.

*Def. 2.* Secondly, that the religious education of children in their youth doth usually appear by the comfortable fruits of it in their old age.

And of these in order, and first of the first, &c.

- I. That the religious education of children is a main duty incumbent upon Parents. Note by Parents here I mean not only natural Parents, but also (as I said before) others to whom they are committed, as School-masters, Tutors, &c. And that this is so, appears plainly by the precepts and commands that are frequently given us in Gods word to that purpose. Saint

*Ephes. 6. 4.* *Paul* exhorts Parents, that they should bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And that they may do so *Solomon's* advice & counsel is, *Prov. 19. 18. Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.* Now seasonable chastening is a special part of Education, as we shall hear anon, and without it (many times) little good is done:

*Prov. 13. 24.* And therefore the same *Solomon* saith, that *he that spares*

s pares the rod bates the child, but he that loves him chastens him betime.

And again, Hear ye children the instruction of a Father, and attend to know understanding: For I give you good doctrine, forsake you not my law. And to set on this exhortation the more, he propounds the example of David and Bathsheba, his own Parents, shewing the tender care and dear affection they shewed to him in his child-hood. *I was (saith he) my fathers sonne, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words, keep my commandments and live, &c.*

One place more, pertinent to this purpose, we have in the same book of Proverbs chap. 29. vers. 15. *The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame.*

For the further and fuller handling of this Doctrine, let us consider.

1. What is meant by Religious Education.
2. Wherein this chiefly consists.
3. Why? or the reasons of it.

*Method of  
handling this  
point.*

As to the first. By Religious Education I mean not only moral Instruction, whereby children are informed of the duties they owe to their Parents, superiours, equals, and inferiours, and to themselves especially, for the right ordering of their lives in a civil, sober, discreet and virtuous manner; which was much commended amongst the wise Heathens, and wherein many of them did excell, as *Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Seneca*; for this was part of their Religion, which they had from nature, dictating thus much unto them, that they owed this duty to their children, to bring them up

*1. What is  
meant by religious educa-  
tion.*



Joh. 17. 3.

was Nica 2  
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814.

up in a virtuous manner; but also, and more especially a christian-care and constant endeavour (according to the means afforded to them) to instruct them in the knowledge and fear of the true God, and a right and saving faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom to know is life everlasting; together with other main fundamentals of Christian Religion, by way of catechizing, or familiar instruction, called the nurture and admonition of the Lord, *Ephes. 6. 4.* And without this all moral institution is in vain and to no purpose in reference to those two main ends for which we came into the world, namely the advancing of Gods glory and the saving of our own souls: for it is a true saying, *Sola salus servire Deo, Our only safety consists in the service of God,* and we cannot serve him aright, otherwise than he hath revealed himself in his holy Word, which because the Heathens wanted, all their best endeavours were but *splendida peccata*, glittering sins. And this Christian knowledge, with the practice of holiness adjoynded to it, is (in one word) called *the fear of the Lord, and the remembering of him in the dayes of our youth.*

3. Particular.

Secondly, It may be demanded wherein (more particularly) this Education doth consist? I answer.

1. In teaching them letters, or learning them to read, if they be capeable, and opportunity and means be afforded: for this is (as it were) the laying of the foundation, without which the structure cannot go on without exceeding great difficulty and hazard: And therefore the very reading of English, which is our mother-tongue, be accounted a special blessing.
2. When they can read, in directing them what, and where, and how to read, that they may get some spiritual

tual good by it; and by explaining to them the principles of Christian Religion, viz. the *Credenda* contained in the Articles of the Christian faith; the *Facienda* in the Decalogue, and the *Petenda* in the Lords Prayer, called the form of whollome word, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13.

ὑποτίθωντες  
τὴν ἐξουσίαν  
τοῦ θ. λόγου.

3. In instructing them in the knowledge of Liberal Arts and Tongues (so farre as may be) for a great and unvaluable treasure is contained in them; and without them an exact knowledge of the word of God, (in an ordinary way) cannot be attained. Humane learning is *quasi ancilla Theologia*, very usefull and servicesable, and therefore they that speak against it, know not what they say. St. Paul himself made use of it, by citing three of the Greek Poets to confute the enemies of the truth, namely *Aratus*, *Menander*, *Epimenides*,

3.

*Ath.* 17. 28.  
*1 Cor.* 15. 32.  
*Tit.* 1. 12.

4. In admonishing them often of their duties, that they may avoid the vices incident to youth, and practise those virtues that may adorn that tender age, and be as a garland of Bayes to crown it. The best of men stand in need of admonition, much more children who are apt to slip and fall if they be not carefully watched over. The character that the Poet gives of the young man is this. He is of a waxen disposition to vice, but dull enough to virtue.

4.

*Cereus in vitium  
flecti;  
inutilem  
tardus, Hor.  
prodigiosus*

5. In encouraging, praising and commending them when they do well; yea and bestowing upon them *pericilia premia*, some small rewards to animate them the more in *studio virtutis*. As a Common-wealth is well governed, *cum boni efficiuntur premiis, & mali penis*, when good men are rewarded, and evil men are punished, so also is a School. And therefore those School-masters are much to be commended, who themselves have.

have learned rightly to exercise this distributive justice.

6.

6. In reproving and correcting them for their faults, when other means will not serve the turn. A School-master must have a Ferula and a Rod in readiness as well as an Apple or a Raisin. How often doth the wise Solomon make mention of the Rod in his *Proverbs*?

*Prov. 22. 15. He that spares the rod hates the child, Prov. 13. 24. Folly is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it farre from him. And again, Withhold not correction from thy child; for if thou beatest him with*

*Prov. 23. 13. the rod he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell. And chap. 29. The rod and reproof give wisdom, &c.*

14.

The Ferula and Rod from a discreet School-master is as a pill or potion from a skillfull Physitian, not to hurt, but to help; not to kill but to cure his endeared Patient. But the wisdom of the Teacher must direct him when and how to apply this remedy, as we shall hear anon. Only thus for the present. Let him rather incline to lenity then severity; for so doth our heavenly Master deal with all his Scholars, who usually never takes the rod in hand, but when (in a manner) forced thereunto. and is pained himself when he puts them to pain. See *Ho. 11. 8, 9.*

3. Particu-

lar, viz. the

Reasons

Thirdly, the reasons of the Doctrine now follow, which are divers.

Religious Education of Children is a main duty incumbent upon Parents, for

Reas. 1.

First, God himself commands it, as in all the places before mentioned, especially that in the sixth to the *Ephesians ver. 4.* where Parents are commanded to bring up

up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. How often is this inculcated to the Israelites, that they should not only learn his Statutes, Judgements, Laws and Ordinances themselves, but that they should teach them to their children, yea and their childrens children: yea this must be their daily task. *These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house; and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, Deut. 11. 19.* And to his command we may add his own example. God himself became *Adams* School-master in Paradise, and taught him his duty. He himself instructed *Moses* in Mount *Sinai*, that he might instruct the people. And *Christ Jesus* our Saviour had his 12. Apostles and 72. Disciples the Scholars of his upper and lower Classis, who were sent forth to teach the whole world the doctrine of life and salvation.

Secondly, those are highly commended that have made conscience of their duty. God gives *Abraham* his speciall *Scio* for this. *I know Abraham* (saith he) *Gen. 18. 17.* that he will command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to doe justice and judgement; yea, he is not only commended, but rewarded for this; as it followeth in the next words, that the Lord might bring upon *Abraham* that which he hath spoken of him, that is, the *Blessing*. See *Gal. 3. 8.*

*Solomon* sounds forth his Father *Dauids* praise when he tells us, not only of his dear affection to him, but also of his good instruction of him: *I was* (saith he) *my*

Prov. 4. 3,  
4. 5.

Fathers sonne, tender and only beloved in the sight of my Mother. He taught me also, and said, let thine heart retain my words, &c. And it is left upon record also for the high commendation of his Mother Bathsheba, that she was not wanting in the discharge of her duty in this good work: Read her tender and pathological expressions in Prov. 31. 2, 3, &c. *What, my sonne? and what, the sonne of my womb? what the sonne of my vawes? Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy wates to that destroyeth Kings, &c.* S. Paul commends *Timothies* Mother and Grandmother for this: Yea, among the Heathens this was matter of commendation. *Philip of Macedon* gave thanks to God, not only that he had a Son, but also that he was born in such a time wherein *Aristotle* might be his School-master. Among the Lacedemonians these were preferred, and had the freedom of Citizens, that did virtuously bring up their children, and those that neglected that duty were deprived of that priviledge.

2 Tim. 1. 5.  
cum 2 Tim.  
3. 15.

Reas. 3.

Thirdly, because good education of youth is a special means to pluck up that vice that naturally is sowed in the hearts of all men, and to prevent those sins that otherwise they will unavoidably commit. Parents and Teachers must play the part of Gardiners, whose care is, first to weed the soyl before they sow it with good seeds. *Socrates* confessed that his inclination was to viciousness, but that Philosophy had mended him. And *Solomon* tells us, that this is the means to avoid the way of the evil man, and the path of the strange woman, Prov. 2. 10, 11, &c. And common experience proves this continually, that children of good education are usually free from those exorbitances which others are  
fouly

fouly debauched with.

Fourthly, because good education is a means to plant *Deut. 10* morall virtues, yea and true grace also in the Soul : for though the preaching of the Word be the ordinary *Rom. 1. 16* means to convert sinners, and save souls, yet God, who is *Liberimum Agens*, a most free Actor, can, and (no doubt) sometimes doth bless private means to this purpose. *Timothy* was good betime and knew the Scripture of a child; and what better reason can be given of of it then the good education he had from his Mother and Grandmother, of whom before? However all will grant that good education is a notable means to water the seeds of grace once sown, and to bring them to perfection; which may check the folly of these that are to curious to know the punctilio of time, when themselves or others were converted. When children are fully capable of reason, they are of religion, if God give the blessing to good education. Childrens minds are not unficly compared to blank papers, wherein you may write what characters you please, but if they be let alone, Satan will print his own image on them.

Fifthly (and which is an effect of the former) because *Reas. 5.* good education pollisheth a man, and makes him a man indeed; It teacheth him what to doe, and what to leave undone, at all times, places, companies and conditions: and without this a man is rather a beast then a man, yea, and in some sense worse then a beast. *Plutarch* saith well, that instruction is the fountain and root of well doing. And *Plato* gives the reason, when he saith, *puerum quavis bestia esse intractu liberem*, that a child (left to himself) is more untractable then any beast. Which *Zophar* in *Job. chap. 11, 12.* acknowledgeth,

Πάντα ἡ γίγναται  
παλο κερδοῦσι  
παιδεία.



ledgeth, when he saith, *that man is born like a wild asses colt.*

*A notable example out of Licurgus.*

Education therefore makes a great difference, which *Licurgus* demonstrated to the Lacedemonians by a notable example of two dogs of the same Litter, the one brought up to hunting, the other left to lick in the Kitchen; and in a full convention of the people he caused both the dogs to be brought before them, together with a live hare and a pot of pottage; the hunting dog left the pottage and followed the hare; the other looked not after the hare, but fell to his lapping. Now by this example of the dogs you may plainly see (saith he) the difference of men, how farre those who have good education excel those who want it.

*Reas. 6.*

Sixthly, and lastly, Good education fits men for publick places and employments; both in Church and State. Out of the Schools of the Prophets proceed Prophets, and out of the Schools of the Philosophers proceed Philosophers. Magistrates, Ministers, Senators, Souldiers are not born such by nature, but made such by nurture. *Alexander* therefore ingeniously confessed that he owed more to *Aristotle* his Master then to *Philip* his Father, because he had only his being from his Father, but his well-being from his Master. And *Plato* predicates that Common-wealth to be happy, where Philosophers bear rule. And also unto this, that good education (many times) brings men of mean Parentage to great riches, honour, renown and dignity. By this *Agathocles* a Potters son became a Prince, *Willigisius* a Carpenters son Archbishop of *Mentz*, and our *Wolsey* a Butchers son Cardinal of *York*; Therefore *Aeneas Silvius* was wont to say of Learning, that popular men

*Men of mean birth to great preferment.*

men should esteem it as silver, Noble-men as gold, and Princes as pearls.

Good education fits Earth with Hero's, and Heaven with holy-ones : It's a means to make a mans life holy, and his death happy : It makes a man live after he is dead, by a name and fame that proves immortal.

Having therefore cleared, illustrated and proved this so profitable and necessary a Doctrine, let us now proceed to make application of it : And it serves for a threefold use : First for Information, or Instruction. Secondly for Reprehension. Thirdly for Exhortation.

First for Information, and so we are here instructed, what cause we have to praise the Lord, when he stirreth up the hearts of any that have power in their hands to afford means for the good education of youth. Gods promise was, *Isai 49. 23. to give Kings to be nursing Fathers, and their Queens to be nursing Mothers to his Church,* and how graciously hath he performed this promise since the word became Christians : *Constantine* began, and was exceeding liberal; *Theodosius* and other worthy Emperors succeeded, and thought nothing too much for this and such like pious uses. *Charles the Great* (as *Aretius* in his Problems tells us) was the first that instituted Schools in *Europe*, whom *Otho* and *Henry* followed, and others after them to their great and everlasting renown : Yea, in our own Land, how many of our Kings, Queens, and others of several ranks both of the Clergie and Laity have done worthily in this particular ! And in this County many free Schools have been erected formerly and of late, as in *Chester, Northwich, Maxfield, Bunbury, Wrenbury, Mottram, Audlem,* and now last of all God hath put it into the

Use.  
For information.

*Aretius Prob.  
de Diligent.*

*Many Free-  
schools in  
Cheshire*

the hearts of divers in this Parish and the Neighbourhood, some of Honour and Worship, others, though of meaner place, yet well affected to doe the like for *Acton*. Let us therefore take notice of this mercy, and be thankfull to God for it; for it is he that hath opened the hearts and hands of the Benefactors, to contribute to so good a work. So did *David*, when he saw the Princes and People so willing to contribute largely for the building of the Temple: *Lord* (said he) *who am I? and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.* Whoever is the Instrument, God is the Author of every good work, let him therefore have the glory and honour.

1 Chron. 29.

14.

James 1. 17.

2. Secondly, we are here also informed that a secondary thanks is due to the Benefactors, especially those who have contributed most, and have done it with a publick spirit, having neither children of their own, nor other near relations, that (for the present) can claim any interest, nor reap any benefit from their liberality.

The Jews in our Saviour Christs time (though otherwise unthankfull enough) yet thankfully acknowledged the Centurions love to them and their Nation, and the real effects of it, in building them a Synagogue; and therefore made this good work of his a reason and motive to Christ to heal his Servant. Unthankfulness to God is a great sin, and to men a gross absurdity: to say no more, let the poor of this Parish shew their thankfulness to the Founders of this good work, by their unfeigned prayers to God for them, for an increase of his blessings upon them here, and an everlasting,

verlasting reward in heaven hereafter.

Secondly, this Doctrine comes for reprehension to all those who having children or other relations committed to their trust, neglect the care of Christian Education. And alas ! how many are there among us that are deeply guilty this way ! Many are so palpably ignorant, that they scarce know it is a duty, yet that lies upon them ; others are so notorious profane, that though they know it is a duty, yet they make no conscience to perform it. Is it any marvel that the children of such grow dissolute and disordered ? Is it any marvel that they prove a heart-breaking to them in their old age ? Fields and Gardens that are neglected within a while will be overgrown with weeds, and briars, and brambles : And so it is with our Families, with our Children and Servants, they will quickly grow wanton and wicked, if they be not tutored.

Use 2.  
For reprehension.

The main cause why there is so much wickedness both in the State and Church, is, because so many Families are profane and wicked. If the first concoction of the stomach be bad, the other of the liver and veins cannot be good. So if Families be disordered, other societies both Civil and Ecclesiastical will be like them, for the foundation of good or bad Government is laid in Families.

*Diogenes* is said to have stricken the Master, when the Scholar proved ill-manner'd, and I doubt many Parents deserve the like for their gross neglect towards their children.

A great sinne  
for Parents  
to neglect the  
education of  
for their children

It is a great sin for Parents to neglect to doe this duty themselves but it is a greater not to let others do it

for them. Therefore such Parents are altogether inexcusable, as having means of education offered (as you now have in this Parish) do yet neglect it, in not sending their children to School, where they might get both learning and virtue.

And one main cause of this great carelesness, is (as I conceive) the low esteem, if not base contempt they have of learning; and no marvail, for we read of some in eminent places that have been sick of the same sore. *Licinius* the wicked Emperor is reported to be such an enemy to learning, that he called it the bane and poyson of the Common-wealth. And Pope *Paul* the second was so afraid of learning, that he called all Scholars Hereticks.

*Use 3.  
Exhort.*

But in the third and last place it is for **Exhortation**. Is the pious education of children a duty incumbent upon Parents, and of high concernment to them? *Heb. 13. 15.* Then I beseech you (beloved) suffer the words of Exhortation, and that from him who is your unworthy Minister at present, and hath been employed in that painfull and profitable calling of School-teaching heretofore, for a great part of his time, and therefore should know something by his own experience.

First therefore let me say something to the Parish in general, secondly to those whom it more specially concerns in particular.

*1. To the Parish in general*

In general thus. Consider (I beseech you) how good the Lord hath been unto you, in continuing the means of grace to you so long: You have had the Word preached to you for many years together without interruption, by divers of his Servants whom he hath sent amongst you. Oh, remember an account must be

be given for this ! And now he hath provided means for the constant education of your children, and childrens children, to future generations for ever ; and is not this also a great mercy. Be thankfull therefore to God for his abundant goodness to you and yours, as I hinted in the first application, and shew your thankfulness by a faithfull obedience through the whole course of your lives and conversations.

More particularly let me take the boldness,

First to these in the Parish, who being of constant means and ability, have yet refused to contribute to this good Work. Truly I must needs say, that I conceive these to be penny-wise and pound-foolish ; and it is both their sinne and shame, and their loss : Their sin, because these forget the Apostles rule. *To do good and to distribute forget not.* Their shame for it brings a blot upon them, as too too parcimonious and niggardly : And their loss, because (if they live but a few years) they must pay more for the yearly education of their children then would have made them and theirs free for ever, unless they mean to free themselves from all charges, by letting them be dolt at home, and so sit for no ingenious employment. But a word is enough to wise men, and I hope they will yet in time purchase their own and their childrens freedom.

Secondly, To Parents my advice is divers.

1. Doe not keep your children idle at home, or as we are wont to say worse occupied, but when they are capable, send them to School to be instructed.

2. Furnish them with books, and other necessaries fit for Scholars, that they may go on in their studies

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with-

2 PARISHIAN

1.

2.

1.

2.



without discouragement. Every manual Trade must be furnished with utensils and instruments for it, and so must Schollers. And let the rich help the poor, that (many times) cannot help their children in this particular.

3. When you have once sent them to School, do not discontinue them, but keep them constantly to their books, till they be fitted for some good employment. Inconstancy spoils many good undertakings, and in none more then Schollers.

4. Take heed of being too much indulgent on the one hand, or discouraging on the other to your children, for either of these may blast their education. *Solons counsel to Fathers is, that they should not laugh on their sons, lest they should grow too familiar. And St. Paul gives a good caveat to prevent the other extreme, viz. that Fathers should not provoke their children to anger, lest they should be discouraged.* Mothers (many times) miss it in the former, and Fathers (sometimes) in the later error. Let both therefore labour to keep the golden mean.

*Solons counsel  
to Fathers  
Col. 3. 21.*

5. Encourage the Master in his laborious calling, and stop your ears against whispering tale-bearers, or the groundless complaints of your own children. If the Master be fit to teach your child, it is very fitting he should correct him when occasion serves.

6. Make conscience of praying often and earnestly for your children, and for a blessing upon the means of their education. Both in the House and School; for Gods promise in this, as in other things, is conditional. *2 Sam. 7. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Let me crave leave to speak a word or two to your School-master, having my self owned that name, and been employed in that service many years. And here first let me premise the necessary qualifications of a good School-master; for *ex quo vis ligno non fit Mercurius*, every man that is learned, yea, and laborious too is not fit for this Calling. I conceive therefore that a good School-master must be

3.

Four things  
necessary for a  
good School-  
master.

1. *Vir pius*, a godly and religious man; one that truly fears God, and makes conscience of his wayes, otherwise he may soon do more hurt by his evil practice, then he can do good by his good precepts. He must first himself be taught of God before he can teach others; he must be nurtur'd himself before he nurture others. It is a fine saying of *Chrysostome*; *Nihil juvat institutio verbis facta, nisi ipsius operis exhibitio ditiis accedat*; Instruction by words profiteth nothing, unless to words there be an addition of deeds. *Diogenes* therefore wittily compares evil Teachers to Harps, which by their sweet sound delight the hearers, but neither hear nor are delighted with their own sound. It will easily be replied to such a one, *Physician heal thy self*.

1.

A fit compa-  
rison.

2. He must be *vir prudens*, a discreet, wise, and prudent man. This virtue is necessary for all men of publick employment, and especially for School-masters: And it appears in two things more then others.

2.

1. In finding out the genius, disposition and nature of the child, for all are not of one humour: Some are meek-hearted, and smooth-handed, like *Jacob*, others are rough and rugged like *Esau*. Some are of a timorous, yet towardly disposition, check'd with a word,

1.

over-awed with a look; others are high and haughty, stiffe and sturdy, *qui non verbis, sed verberibus domandi*, who will not be tamed with soft words, but sharp stripes. Such knotty-pieces will not easily be cloven: *Malo ligno opus est malo clunco*; Rough hearts must have rough handling. Physicians say, that a disease found out is half cured, so may School-masters.

2.

2. In dealing with the child according to his disposition. It were abundance of indiscretion, rashness, and folly, to put the Master into a pet, and the child to pain, when a word or a look would mend what's amiss. Nor can the Master excuse himself to God or man, by stroaking the head of a sturdy boy, whose disposition and demeanor calls for stripes. The Master therefore must prudently imitate our heavenly Master, who towards the meek and mild shews himself gentle and mercifull, and towards the froward useth frowardness.

*Psal. 18. 25,*  
26.

3.

3. He must be *mediocriter doctus*, competently learned; for otherwise what can be expected from a Dunce, but to make Dunces, and a Sort to send forth Sorts. Because *Bucolizer* was himself learned, and with all conscientious, *Melancton* would not so much as question any of his Schollers that came from his School to the University. Learning therefore is necessary for a School-master, especially in the two learned Tongues, Latin and Greek; and those two liberrall Arts, Grammar and Rhetorick, both as to the Theory and Praxis; for *nemo dat quod non habet*; no man can teach that to others which he hath not learned himself.

4. He

4. He must be *bene temperatus*, a well-temper'd man, not of a dull and melancholick, nor of a hot and hasty disposition, lest by the former distemper he lose his authority, and by the later incur the censure of a passionate man, either of which may bring a blemish upon him.

Now being thus qualified, my exhortation is,

1. That he begin and end his work daily with the service of God. Let prayer be with his practice for and with his Schollers morning and evening. Let them be well catechised in the grounds and principles of Christian Religion once a week at least. Let him see that the Lords day be sanctified of himself and his Schollers, and an account given how they profit by publick Ordinances.

1.

*What a Schoolmaster must do.*

2. Let him restrain them (as much as possibly can be) from the exorbitances and vices of the time, that Gods name be not dishonoured by the profaneness of his Schollers, nor an ill report brought upon his School; but on the contrary, a good report may be gained by the exercise of virtue and good behaviour.

2.

3. For the promoting of knowledge and learning in his School, let him labour to get and use a good method in teaching, then which nothing will more profit his Schollers. And herein God hath been wonderfull gracious to this Age of ours, in raising up many excellent Instruments, rarely qualified, who have found out and published a farre more ready and expedite way for the speedy attaining of Arts and Tongues than former Ages have been acquainted with.

3.

4. Let him be constant to his method, deliberately chosen; for an inconstant usage in his School, will disturb

4.

disturb himself, and distract his Schollers. The Rowling stone gathers no moss, and a rambling method but little learning.

5. 5. Let him be diligent and industrious, and think no pains too much to profit his Schollers in their course of learning. His task is laborious. It's a plow that must be followed, else no fruit will be reaped. *The hand of*

*Prov. 10. 4. the diligent makes rich,* as well with internal as external riches. The Greeks have a Proverb that may provoke to industry, ὁ πόνος ἐστὶν ἰσχυρίας πατρὸς; *Labour is the Father of honour.* And another not unlike this, ἡ μελέτης πλείους ἢ φύσεως ἀγαθοί; *More men are better by industry then nature.* Let him consider that though the root of labour be bitter, yet the fruit will be sweet and pleasant. Let him lay a sure foundation in well grounding his Schollers, though it cost him dear, by his pains with them.

6. 1. Let his Discipline be as commendable as his Teaching, and let him be constant in that as well as in this. Once a week let an account be taken of the behaviour of his Scholars, that the good and virtuous may be encouraged, commended, and sometime rewarded; the bad and vitious checked, reprov'd, and corrected. Let seasonable recreation be allowed sometimes to all, but most what to those who best deserve it, I mean the studious; and let loyterers sometimes be deprived of this liberty, or other School-masters laid upon them for their amendment.

And I hope God hath provided such a one for us, for whose encouragement let me use the speech of *Melancthon* to *Bucaltzer* when he was chosen School-master to the Free-School of *Grunkbury*; *Quantum solatium*



tium est pio Pedagogo, assidentibus castis Angelis, sedere *A fine saying*  
 in catu incontaminato juniorum, qui Deo placent, & do- *of Melancton*  
 cere tenera ingenia; ut recte agnoscant, & invocent Deum, *to Buxoltzer.*  
 & deinde organa fiant utilia Ecclesie, & suis animabus!  
*Oh how great a solace is it to a pious School-master, the holy*  
*Angels being present to sit in the choice company of young*  
*Scholars who please God, and to teach tender wits that*  
*they may rightly acknowledge and invoke God, and af-*  
*terwards be made profitable Instruments of the Churches*  
*good, and their own eternall salvation.*

Fourthly, To the youth of this Parish, and others *Exhortation*  
 that may come here to be educated, let me briefly add. *to young*

1. To begin to fear God, and to serve him berimes. *Schollers.*  
 Dedicate the flower of your time to him. Remember *I.*  
 that good counsell of Solomon, *Eccl. 12. 1*  
*Remember now thy Cre-*  
*ator in the dayes of thy youth.* God will have the first  
 fruits, not the gleanings of your age.

2. Love, Reverence, honour and obey your Pa- *2.*  
 rents. Nature it self teacheth you this duty, Grace  
 much more. *Honour thy Father and thy Mother* is one *Exod. 20. 12.*  
 of Gods Commandements, & the first of the second Ta- *Ephes. 6. 2, 3*  
 ble, backed with a promise of long life, and great pro-  
 sperity. That child can never hope to prosper now,  
 or be happy hereafter that disobey his Parents.

3. Performe the same duties to your Master at *3.*  
 School that you doe to your Parents at home; for in  
 Gods account he is your Father. And there is little  
 hope, that that child will obey his Father at home  
 that is disobedient to his Master at School.

4. Get a love to learning, and then you will be *4.*  
 learned; *Amanti nihil est difficile,* Love to any thing *Εαν τις φιλο-*  
*makes it easie,* though otherwise it may seem hard and *μαθης τον πο-*  
*λυμαθης.*  
*Hoc ad Dem.*  
 difficult.



difficult. Be not drawn to the School as a Bear to the stake, but goe willingly as to a place of pastime.

5. Be diligent and studious; learning will not be had by loitering, but by labouring. Ply your books not only at School, but at home, and by the way. If your Master must take pains for your good, how much more you for your own. Have a holy emulation which shall excell. Time is precious, take heed you doe not loose it.

6. Look well to your carriage and behaviour at home, in the School, and in all other places. Stain not the fair flower of your tender age with vice, but adorn it with virtue. Know that though learning be good, yet virtue is better. Take heed therefore of evil company, which hath been the bane of many young men, and poysoned many hopefull plants; and sort and suit your selves with those that fear God. Briefly learn and practise *Lillies* precepts, not only for your studies, but behaviour also; and remember what he saith: *Puerum nil nisi pura decent.*

To the Feoffees.

Col. 4. 17.

Fittly and lastly, My exhortation is to you that are Feoffees, Trustees, or Guardians of the School. Let me say to you as *Paul* did to *Archippus*: Take heed to the Office you have undertaken, and fulfill it. As it is with your houses, so it will be with your School. A house well built must be looked to after, and repaired in time, or else in time it will be ruined: And so a School well founded (as I hope yours is) may yet come to rack, if that foundation be not regarded. Now a charge lies upon you, to look to this, see therefore that you faithfully discharge it. You have been helpers to build up the School by your pains and puries, take heed you be

be not helpers to pull it down by carelesnes and negligence. Let not self-interest hinder a publick good, which ought to be prefer'd before a private. My advice is, that every one of you have a Copy of your School Orders by you, that you may know what they are, else how can you put them in execution. Let the Master and Scholars be encouraged when they do well, and timely admonished when they miss it. Do not put it off from one to another, but strive who shall be first to do most good. We were wont to say, *Quod a multis fit male fit, That which many do is* (many times) *done amiss*, but do not you so, but joyn your forces, and so more good will be done, and more easily. And one thing especially let me admonish you of : Take heed that the children of the poor be not sleighted, for they were specially aimed at, when the first motion was made of making a Free-School : And if it come within your reach, and opportunity and means be offered, let some courte be thought of for the free teaching of the poor Girls of the Parish, whose Parents want means to pay for their Schooling, seeing instruction is as necessary for the good of their souls as for the other.

*Or an Abstract of them.*

*Poor children not to be sleighted.*

But I have been farre larger upon this point then at first I intended, and therefore must hasten to the second, wherein I shall be briefer, and so conclude : It is this, That the religious education of youth doth usually appear in old age in the comfortable fruits of it.

*Doct. 2.*

*Train up a child* (saith Solomon) and what benefit will he reap from it ? why this, namely, that it will not only do him good for the present, but for the future

E

also

also. He will not forget it, when he is old, but will remember it for his good, as long as he lives.

*Examp.*  
Solomon.

The truth of this appears in *Solomon* himself. See *Prov.* 4. 1, 2, 3, 4. He had excellent education from his Father and Mother, and made good use of it, even to admiration! for though he had his slips and falls, yet he recovered himself again, and the seeds of grace that was sown in his tender years revived again in due time, to make him a pattern of wisdom, piety, and repentance. How eminent also did *Timothy* prove, who had been so brought up by his Grand-mother and Mother (as you heard before) *Tim.* 3. 14. We are wont to say, *Bend the twig betimes, and you may make that grow straight that otherwise would grow crooked.* Creatures that are wild by nature, being tamed when they are young, continue so as long as they live.

*Timothy.*

It is a true saying of the Heathen Poet.

*Horace.*

*Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem  
testa diu.*

*The Vessel savours long of the liquor that first seasoned it.*

*Reas.*

And the main reason is, because education (as we noted before) is to the Soul, as Physick to the body, which being taken betimes, may prevent that disease which otherwise may prove mortall. As it is with the diseases of the body, so it is with the maladies of the mind; the sooner they are purged out, the safer it is for the subject in which they grew, for custom usually grows to a habit, and is to a man as another nature.

*Principiis c-*  
*bsta is a good*  
*rule.*

Vice being cherished grows incorrigible, and virtue encouraged, proves undaunted: Therefore as the education is, be it good or bad, so usually proves the mind eminent either in vice or virtue.

But

But methinks I hear some say, that experience proves *Object.*  
 this to be false, because we see those who have been  
 well educated to prove ill-condition'd, & *contra.*

To this I answer, that it must needs be granted, that *Solut.*  
 sometimes it so falls out, that good education proves  
 fruitless; the greater is the sin of such who have been  
 so educated; to let us see that the blessing is in Gods  
 hand and not in ours; for *Paul may plant, and Apollos* *1 Cor. 3. 6.*  
*may water, but it is God who must give the increase.* But  
 we see the truth of the point many times made good  
 by comfortable experience. There are few practical  
 rules in Divinity as well as Morality, which do not  
 sometimes admit an exception. But Parents may com-  
 fort themselves in this, that they have done their du-  
 ties in well-nurturing their children, who must bear  
 their sin, if they be not well nurtur'd.

Now for Application; The use of this is.

*Use 1.*

1. For encouragement to Parents to use the means, *Encourage-*  
 and referre the success to Gods good pleasure. Neglect *ment.*  
 not therefore the care of your childrens good educa-  
 tion, seeing the fruit of it will be so durable. Would you  
 have your children to be good old men and women,  
 season them betimes with good instruction: If they  
 once begin to taste the sweetness of knowledge and  
 grace when they are young, their desire will still be to  
 them when they are old. *Cytrenus* when he lay upon  
 his death bed, spake thus to some who were talking  
 softly before him. *Speak out, for I shall die the willinger*  
*if I may learn something more before I die.*

2. It makes for exhortation to children.

*Use 2.*

1. to praise God for the care their Parents have of *Exhortation.*  
 them in their youth. Good education may do them  
 more

1.

Dionisius ex-  
pel'd his  
Kingdome,  
taught School

more good then all the goods their Parents can leave them. Good education may be a surer inheritance then Lands or Livings. *Dionisius* a King, being expelled his Kingdome, yet being learned, got a living by teaching School in *Corinth*, saying to those who came to see him, *Adhuc regno, I am yet a King*, pointing to his Scholars, whom he took as his Subjects.

2.

Sigismund  
the Emperor  
bewail'd his  
want of  
Learning.

2. To improve the means of good education. A price is in your hands, oh neglect it not, lest hereafter it repent you. One notable example I shall give you, and then coculude. *Sigismund* the Emperour bewail'd his want of learning in the Council of *Constance*, and therefore began to study the Latine tongue, though late: He also prefer'd men of low degree who were learned before others who were illiterate, though nobly born, which when some repined at, his answer was, I can make Knights and Lords as many as I will in one day, but God only can make Scholars. And you have heard how he makes them, not by miracle, but by means. Good education and instruction is necessary, and the good of it long-lasting. *Train up a child in the way he should goe, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

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